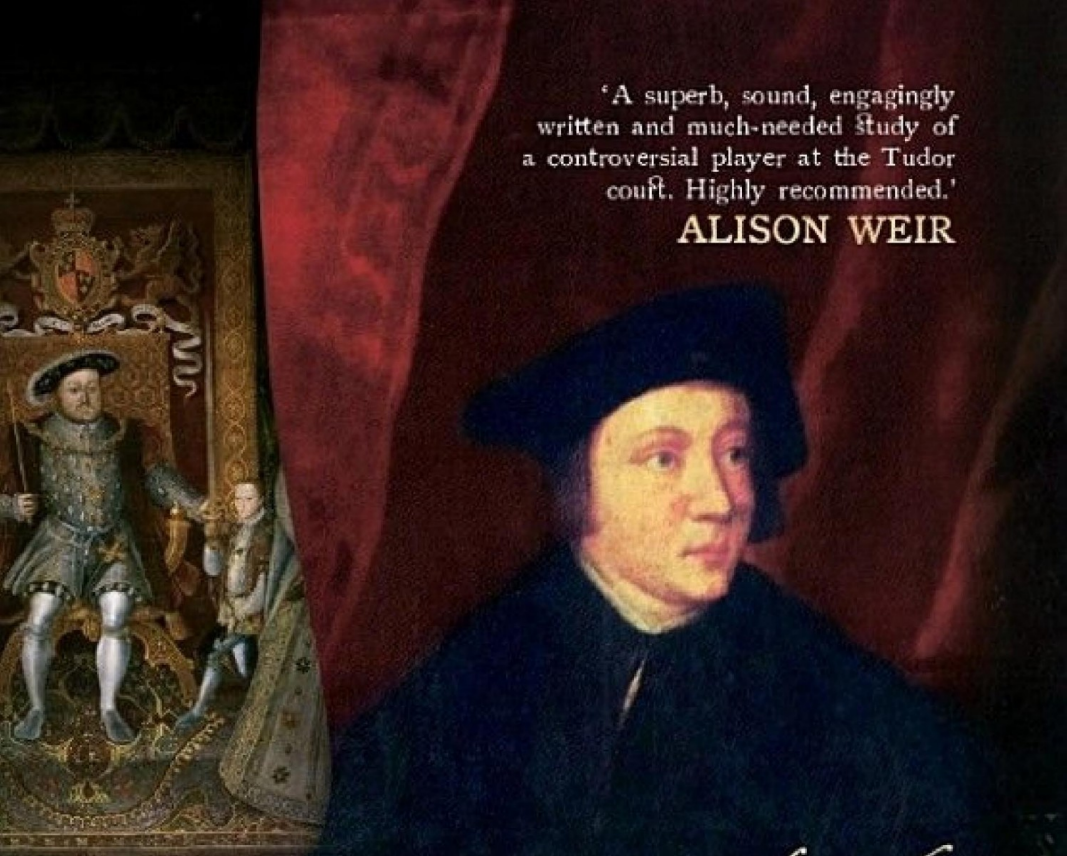
'A superb, sound, engagingly written and much-needed study of a controversial player at the Tudor court. Highly recommended.'
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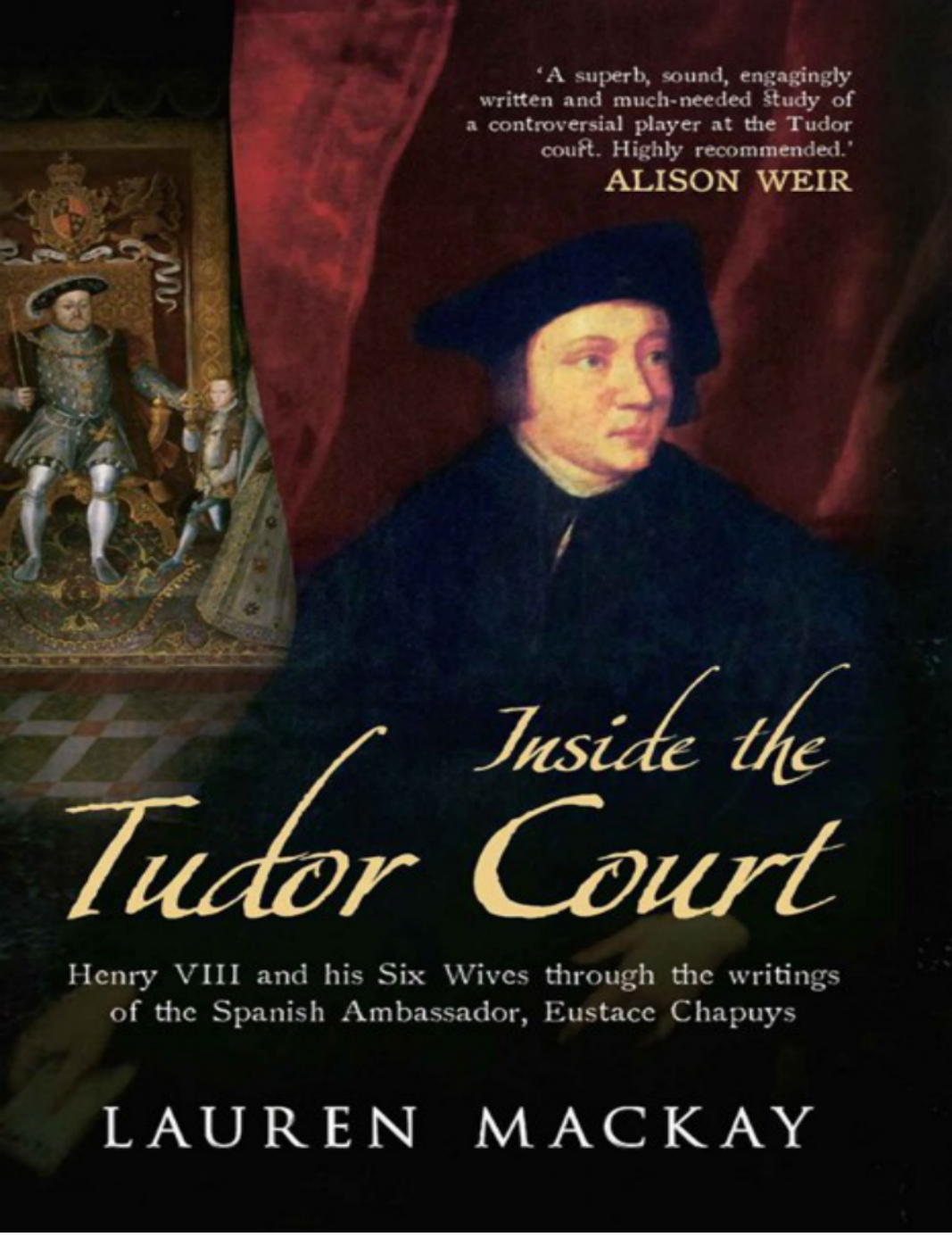
Inside the Tudor Court

Henry VIII and his Six Wives through the writings of the Spanish Ambassador, Eustace Chapuys

LAUREN MACKAY

VISIT...




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For Cameron

Front cover: *Portrait d'Eustace Chappuis*. Anon, seventeenth century (Musée-chateau, Annecy, France). *An Allegory of the Tudor Succession* (Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection). Back cover: Original letter (Courtesy of Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, Austria). Back flap: Mary Tudor (Courtesy of Ripon Cathedral).

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Preface

> *Although Eustace Chapuys occupied a position of almost unique importance among sixteenth century diplomats, he is known to students of Tudor history chiefly as a name at the bottom of despatches of amazing freshness and penetration.*[1]

The reign of Henry VIII is one of the most frequently studied yet controversial periods of British history. The great schism with Rome – Henry's dramatic transition from *Fidei Defensor* to an excommunicated monarch – and the matrimonial dramas of divorces and beheadings continue to enthral historians as well as screenwriters and novelists. Centuries on, we can still feel a connection to these Tudor superstars: Henry VIII of course, his six wives, his doomed councillors – Thomas Wolsey, Thomas More and Thomas Cromwell – among others. Why are they so vivid almost 500 years later? How is it that these larger-than-life personalities remain alive to us across the centuries?

The answer lies to a large extent in the man whose life was dedicated to reporting on the significant events and personalities of the Tudor court. Eustace Chapuys, Imperial ambassador to the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain, Charles V, spent sixteen years at the Tudor court, from 1529 to 1545, embroiled in the political culture. As a result, his ambassadorial correspondence provides historians with a rich and detailed narrative of the players and proceedings at Henry VIII's court, and of Henry's complex domestic and foreign policies. From Chapuys we learn about Henry the man, his matrimonial woes, his six wives and other colourful personalities. Historians have provided us with sketches of these individuals, but Chapuys provides us with invaluable letters and despatches, which give them their colour and texture. His reports transcend politic because he focuses on personalities rather than just diplomatic process.

Eustace Chapuys has for too long remained in the shadow of other Tudor personalities. However, he is there, hidden among the footnotes. We catch a fleeting glimpse of him in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, or *All Is True*, under the name Capuchius, in which he appears in a single scene: visiting Katherine of Aragon on her deathbed, a good seven years after he arrived in England. There is no discernible personality in the text; he is merely a concerned subject of the queen.

Unfortunately, the man has been eclipsed by his own despatches. We read Chapuys' fascinating details and accounts of Henry VIII and his court, but we spare little thought for Chapuys the man, and ambassador. What was he like? What were his origins, upbringing, experiences and interests? What shaped his world view? How involved was he in the life of the court?

A key question is, how accurate and objective were his accounts of

Henry's divorce from Katherine of Aragon and marriage to Anne Boleyn? This question arises from Chapuys' unwavering allegiance to Katherine and opposition to Anne. A further question is to what extent did his duties as Imperial ambassador colour his perceptions of Henry, Anne and other instigators of the English Reformation?

For historians, both questions reflect on his reliability as a source.

Chapuys has been labelled in some popular culture as rabidly Catholic, misogynistic, blinded by personal hatred and driven by personal agenda. Yet this is far from the Chapuys who emerges from the original letters. We must acknowledge at the outset that Chapuys was loyal to Katherine, partly on instruction from her nephew and his employer, Emperor Charles V, but also out of genuine sympathy and admiration for her. Those who sympathise with Katherine see Chapuys as her champion, the one person who constantly fought for her cause, even when her own nephew Charles showed signs of giving up.

Those who identify with Anne cannot abide Chapuys' crude titles for her in his letters and correspondence: 'La Putain' (the Whore) or 'the Concubine'. Yet, as we will see in later chapters, many accusations of his adversity to Anne are not well founded; they are merely accusations that have become accepted as fact. Clearly, while we demand complete objectivity from Chapuys as a source, we as readers cannot avoid partisanship ourselves.

Historians for the most part reconcile Chapuys' occasional lack of objectivity with their need to draw on him as a first-hand source of information about the Tudor period. His partisanship on certain issues in no way means we should disqualify him as a valuable source for every issue. As the eminent Tudor historian David Starkey notes,

> Understandably, Chapuys' open, violent prejudice against Anne has led some historians to dismiss his evidence almost in its entirety. This, however, is a mistake. There is in principle no reason why a person's enemies should be less likely to tell the truth about him than his friends. The former exhibit one set of prejudices; the latter another.[2]

Starkey goes on to say,

> Chapuys, despite his evident bias, was careful about his sources. He usually gives the names of his informants and they have turned out to be an impressive bunch. They include leading councillors and courtiers, and well as intimate hangers-on about the great court, including doctors and priests. All were in a position to see and hear the incidents they reported and frequently they corroborate each other.[3]

On the other hand, two Tudor historians – Retha Warnicke and the late Eric Ives – exemplify the struggle to separate Chapuys' reliable information from his personal thoughts and speculations. Ives, in his

occasional discussions of Chapuys, described him as a shrewd man, but one who relied on information fed to him: 'Chapuys continued to see things loyally in Habsburg terms – even when they were misleading.'[4] This statement does not seem do justice to the ambassador's seven years of despatches and documents, which Ives himself relies on. Retha Warnicke dismissed Chapuys completely, stating that he relied on repetition of rumour, information deliberately leaked to him and his own biased speculation, as well as first-hand reports.[5]

However, Warnicke, like Ives and other historians who dismiss Chapuys or play down his significance, continues to rely on him for detailed information regarding diplomacy, Henry's divorce from Katherine, Anne's execution, Jane Seymour's queenship, and countless other issues.

The accusation that Chapuys was blinded by hatred of Anne Boleyn, and that this so distorted his despatches that they cannot be properly relied on, ignores an important fact: apart from Anne, Thomas Cranmer and other Lutheran bishops, Chapuys bore no discernible malice towards anyone at court, and even then the only true discernible malice towards Anne was several years into Chapuys' embassy.

Moreover, as ambassador, it was Chapuys' responsibility to provide the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V with *accurate* information. Nothing in Chapuys' career suggests that he was a yes-man given to telling his superiors what they wanted to hear. Chapuys appears to be scrupulous in his documentation, always indicating the source of his information, and often including his own opinion on its reliability. It would not have benefitted his position to blatantly lie or fabricate information. He would have been caught out, and his reputation as a reliable and trustworthy diplomat torn to shreds.

His despatches are distinguished by their expansiveness, the variety of their sources, and the extreme care with which these sources are indicated. Chapuys' predecessors, such as Inigo de Mendoza, appear often to limit their reports to their personal observations and to information fed to them at court, officially or unofficially. Chapuys, however, was deeply involved in court politics, and had no objective but to record, in sometimes rather complicated ways, the things he saw, heard, discussed and had gleaned from others, as well as his own observations. However, he went further: he also wanted corroboration of information from his eavesdropping informants, including information he had to pay for.

In a court full of intrigue, espionage and drama, he did not always have the time or the luxury to carefully compose or gather his thoughts. His reports were sometimes hastily written as each fact and

comment occurred to him, darting from one train of thought to another, and often returning without apology to the first thought. He was much more fluent and stylistically meticulous in his letters written in Latin. His style and syntax are impeccable, almost academic. Matters were moving at quite a pace at the Tudor court, and, due to the sensitivity of his information, Chapuys often and quite unexpectedly wrote in cipher; even today only three forms of cipher have been decoded.

On the other hand, there were many aspects of Tudor life that he simply disregarded as immaterial or irrelevant. He was particularly flummoxed by the English love of pageants, masques and games, and tended to omit them from his correspondence, often stating that it would be tedious to include them. Thus a picture of the court drawn entirely from Chapuys' despatches would be a vivid, albeit distorted and incomplete picture. His intention was simply to communicate events and issues with as much veracity as possible. Yet elements of his writing style strongly suggest that he wrote for posterity. He preferred historical and biblical analogies to a simple approach, and wrote with great animation.

The Chapuys who emerges from his letters is principled, compassionate, shrewd and an intelligent observer of the complex dynamics of the Tudor court. He despised hypocrisy and rigid class hierarchy; he enjoyed the company of merchants, intellectuals and movers and shakers more than that of English nobility. He recognised self-interest and political expediency when dressed up as national interest or religious piety. He could also be stubborn, presumptuous and boastful. He was often placed in a double bind in carrying out Charles's orders to the letter, regardless of his own feelings on the matter. Many of his despatches take on their proper weight only with repeated reading. No historian of Tudor England can afford to ignore him. I hope to rescue Chapuys from his relative obscurity among the footnotes and let him take his place as a multifaceted individual who helped shape British history. This book, then, is not a chronological account of Henry and his court, nor is it purely a biography of the six wives.

Devotees of Tudor history will note that I omit various known incidents and individuals because Chapuys also left no record of his private life, such as amorous affairs; we know he sired a son, but he gives no names. We have no personal diary, only his despatches, and where they go, I must follow.

Rather, this is a book about his relationships, the nature of diplomacy, and the life of a man to whom scholars owe an incredible debt. This is a book from his perspective.

A Game of Politics

The search for Chapuys the man begins in the charming old city of Annecy at the foot of the Alps in south-eastern France, near the border with Switzerland, about 40 kilometres south of Geneva. It was here in the late fifteenth century that Eustace Chapuys (sometimes spelt Chapuis or Chappuis) was born to Louis and Guigone Chapuys (maiden name Dupuys). The family name has, in the past, been recorded as a French word for carpenter, but there is no evidence that *charpentie*r, French for carpenter, can be linked to it.

The exact year of his birth is uncertain, as we lack the equivalent of a birth certificate. It was 1499, according to a copy of the Latin numerals inscribed on his tomb in the chapel of the Collège de Savoie. Chapuys founded the college in 1551 in his retirement at Leuven (Louvain), Belgium, where he died and was buried in 1556. However, 1499 is clearly too late, as we know Chapuys entered university eight years later. Historian Garrett Mattingly suggests that the stone cutter, or whoever copied the inscription before the tomb and chapel were demolished in 1807, inadvertently included one 'X' too many, therefore the birth date should have been 1489. This makes Chapuys a more plausible eighteen years old on entering university. Another just plausible date in the literature on Chapuys is 1491–92, making him a precocious fifteen-year-old on commencing university; unfortunately the day and month of his birth are unknown.

Annecy, with a population of about 50,000, is the capital of the department of Haute-Savoie, which abuts the department of Savoie. In Chapuys' time the two regions formed the western half of the Duchy of Savoy, which straddled the Alps between France and the Piedmont region in north-west Italy. The duchy's capital was first Chambéry and later Turin in Piedmont. Because of its strategic location and rich agricultural potential, the region has inevitably been involved in a tug of war between kingdoms, principalities and city states. From the tenth century, Annecy became the property of the counts of Geneva, and from 1401 of the counts and later the dukes of Savoy. The town gained importance during the Reformation when Geneva expelled its bishop in 1533, and he fled to Annecy. It was also in Annecy in 1728 that sixteen-year-old Catholic convert Jean-Jacques Rousseau arrived, in flight from his engraver's apprenticeship in Geneva. There he met his benefactress and subsequent lover, Baronne de Warens, also a Catholic convert; she and the philosopher later cohabited in Chambéry.

Savoy was incorporated into France in 1792, and then fell in turn under Sicilian, Sardinian, Spanish and Austrian rule. In 1860, the King of Sardinia asked France for military aid against Austria, in return offering Savoy and Nice to Napoleon III. Lured by the prospect of

peace and firm government, the Savoyards voted overwhelmingly that year for reunification with France under the Treaty of Turin. This was a prelude to the Italian *Risorgimento*; the last Duke of Savoy, Victor Emmanuel II, became king of the newly unified Italy.

Annecy today is a popular winter gateway to the ski resorts of the French Alps. In the abundant sunshine of summer, tents and caravans dot the idyllic countryside, and pleasure craft and swimmers enjoy the clear turquoise waters of Lake Annecy, on whose north-western edge the town lies. Looming over all of this is the mountain range known as the Dents de Lanfon (Teeth of Lanfon), whose jagged peaks remain snow-capped in summer.

For visitors uninterested in skiing or aquatic sports, Annecy offers a picture-postcard medieval centre dominated by the extensive hilltop walls of a late medieval castle, Château d'Annecy. It was occupied by the counts of Geneva from 1219 and later by the dukes of Genevois-Nemours. It now houses Annecy's main museum, La Musée-château d'Annecy. The River Thiou, which feeds waters from Lake Annecy to the River Fier, a tributary of the Rhone, winds through an extensive cobblestone pedestrian precinct; its stonewalled embankment gives it the appearance of a canal, and tourist brochures characterise Annecy as 'the Venice of France'. At one point the river is divided by a twelfth-century stone fortress, the Palais de l'Île, shaped rather like a stone galley, with a gabled superstructure and towers, and anchored in the river. The building was once the administrative centre of the counts of Geneva, and later served as a courthouse, mint and prison; today it houses a small history museum.

Warmer weather attracts throngs of tourists to old Annecy's narrow lanes and river embankment. There they visit the Gothic and Baroque churches, and enjoy the fashionable cafés, bars and boutiques that now occupy the leaning medieval stone buildings. The city's remoteness from destructive wars, and its generations of history-conscious city fathers, have ensured that the old town that Chapuys knew has survived largely intact; in fact today's tourists are walking in Chapuys' footsteps.

Annecy has not forgotten this humanist, intellectual and esteemed Imperial ambassador to the Tudor court. The wide and busy main street, Quai Eustache Chapuis, sweeps around a large park on the lake. Nearby is the Rue du Collège Chappuisien, where the college he founded for underprivileged boys in his retirement in 1549 once stood. In 1888 it was converted into a high school, the Lycée Berthollet, and relocated to its current site; the original college building eventually became a military barracks and was demolished in the 1930s.

Appropriately, Annecy houses the only known portraits of Eustace

Chapuys. The four paintings, none of them on public display, were produced after Chapuys' death, but are possibly copies of contemporary portraits. They are welcome replacements for the grainy, black-and-white image – head and shoulders cropped from one of the paintings – that has long been used to represent Chapuys in the literature.

Two of the paintings, each titled *Portrait d'Eustache Chappuis*, are stored in the Annecy museum, La Musée-château d'Annecy. The three-quarter-length portrait (Fig. 1) is described in the museum catalogue only as seventeenth century, by an unknown artist. Typical of paintings of scholars and clerics of the time, a dignified-looking Chapuys in dark, bulky, possibly silk outer clothing sits in three-quarter profile with his left elbow on a table covered with a red cloth. He is looking rather blankly to his left beneath a tricorne hat, against a background of dark red drapes hanging in folds. Apart from his long face and prominent nose, our eyes are drawn to his slim hands and long, delicate fingers, a feature the artist clearly wished to emphasise. A second portrait (Fig. 4), also undated and unattributed, may be related to the first, judging from the angle of the sitter's head and the style of clothing and hat. The nose and mouth however are somewhat different, and the fingers on the right hand are exaggerated almost to the point of deformity. The small scroll in Chapuys' left hand possibly indicates his tenure as the Imperial ambassador; it might also be connected with his founding of the colleges in Annecy and Louvain. The anonymous painter has depicted a curling page on the left with a Latin inscription and the date 1711, presumably when the work was completed. According to the museum catalogue, the painting once belonged to the collection of the Académie Florimontane, described as a learned society founded in 1606 and dedicated to the research (presumably historical) of the ancient states of Savoy. The Latin inscription on the curling page reads,

> Pre nobilis, Et Spectabilis vir D'Eustachius Chapuis, V. D. Annesiensis, Laba Collogii Louvinny Ex gratia Sabaiseloy et huims fondator. Vis it s.b Obiit 21 Januarii 1556, Atatis 32 Sepicus.
> *Eustace Chapuys, of Annecy, aged thirty-two, a noble and remarkable man, who founded a college in Louvain, and died in January 1556.*

Above the page is Chapuys' family coat of arms, consisting of two white or silver lions separated by a silver band on an azure field. Above this are the Imperial eagles of the Holy Roman Emperor, possibly signifying Chapuys' fealty to Charles V, whom he served. A third portrait of Chapuys was used in a brochure for an exhibition organised by Annecy Municipal Archives in 2006, entitled *Dans le Miroir D'Eustache Chapuys: Un diplomate annecien entre humanisme et Reformes*. The Annecy Municipal Archives understands this portrait is

stored in the museum but, when I visited, the museum was unsure of its whereabouts or provenance.

A fourth portrait (Fig. 18), today housed in the Lycée Berthollet, is also by an anonymous artist and is simply dated to the seventeenth century. Here we have yet another different-looking Chapuys, not only in facial features but in the bright-red robes he is wearing. This portrait was found hidden in the attic of the local Hôpital de la Providence, which was demolished in 1971. To his left, just beyond the curtain, is the Collège Chappuisien, which presumably means this was painted for the college that Chapuys founded in Annecy.

We have no way of knowing how accurately any of these portraits represent Chapuys; we can only hope that one or more are reasonably true to originals painted during his lifetime. While we have various descriptions of him from observers – fretful, foppish, shrewd, manipulative, intelligent and highly strung, to name a few – somewhere in between lies the real Eustace Chapuys. I must state that throughout the book I alternate between his first and last name. To me it separates the man, Eustace, and the ambassador, Chapuys.

There were claims in the seventeenth century by one branch of the Chapuys family that they had old ties to nobility. It is more credible, however, that the family actually emerged from a community of farmers or artisans around Bonne, in the Faucigny region of western Switzerland.[1] Judging from official records, their upward mobility in Annecy society was due entirely to their own efforts rather than to aristocratic connections. The first Chapuys recorded in Annecy is Eustace's great-grandfather Pierre, a stonemason who worked on a tower on Annecy's city wall in 1445. Documents show that it was his son, Anthoine, who took the family's first step up Annecy's social ladder. The family must have valued education, as Anthoine became a notary (*notaire*) in 1450 and was a thriving landowner.[2] Anthoine successfully managed the family's property portfolio by consolidating and increasing its holdings in Annecy, as well as in the newer districts being developed. The purchases of these properties and the deeds of title have survived in various archives. They give us a detailed insight into the real estate business dealings of the city's fifteenth-century burghers, a surprisingly large number of whom were, like Anthoine, acting as notaries.

Anthoine married three times – all to women named Jeanne – and produced three sons: Pierre and Louis (Eustace's father) from his first marriage, and Bernardin from his second.

The date of Anthoine's death is uncertain, but his name is missing from Annecy's tax roll of 24 May 1478. He would have died confident in the knowledge that his talent for property acquisitions had secured the family's financial and social position. One son, Bernardin, became

a monk at the Abbey of Entremont in the Duchy of Savoy, and records indicate that the other sons, Pierre and Louis, were living at the time in the recently extended family home.[3]

Both were ambitious and career-minded, and became notaries like their father. Pierre was also a municipal official, while Louis was elected twice to the Syndicus, which represented Annecy at the Savoy court, and sat on the town council. His letterhead bore the coat of arms of the Count of Geneva – two blue lions on a white background – a privilege conferred only to a select few. The Chapuys family adopted an inverted version of this coat of arms, as seen in one of Eustace's portraits (Fig. 4). The town hall building that Louis frequented is today a presbytery of the church of Notre Dame de Liesse.

Louis and Guigone had three daughters – Bartholomée, Françoise and Louise – and three sons – Jean, Eustace and Philibert. Louis clearly had an aptitude for law, acquiring a law degree and various legal titles – a talent he passed to Eustace. Louis soon encountered problems.

One occurred in January 1487, when Imperial troops en route to Berne and Fribourg in Switzerland broke their journey in Annecy. In order to spare the populace the burden of housing them, members of Annecy Council elected to fund their billets from their own pockets. It would take Louis Chapuys some time to recover from this considerable expense.[4]

When Annecy received a charter to create a town market in 1492, Louis Chapuys was appointed the Market Overseer. Regrettably, there was general dissatisfaction with his administration and he lost the support of the shopkeepers. After an official from Lausanne met the merchants in the summer of 1492, Louis was forced to relinquish his position as Overseer. It was a humiliating affair, but surprisingly the townspeople of Annecy appear to have harboured no ill feeling towards Louis. He continued to make himself indispensable in the court of law, and his counsel was highly sought after.[5] Despite his mismanagement as Market Overseer, he was appointed as the prime contractor, *maître d'oeuvre*, for the construction of a new road from Albigny to Pierre Mageriaz – a fortunate appointment, as Louis had a number of properties that would benefit from the road.

Although by all accounts a very charming person with great enthusiasm for civic projects, it seems that Louis could never quite focus on the task at hand. On 23 May 1488, a progress report found the project was a shambles: great stones lay on the roadside waiting to be laid, and there were few workers or carts about. Louis somehow avoided being severely reprimanded and the report merely noted: '*ipsia visio non perfecte potuit fieri*' (the vision has not yet been perfectly realised).[6] Although we have no accounts written by Louis himself, he

was clearly charming and adept at extricating himself from messes of his own making. However, like his father, Louis was financially astute and continued to expand the family's holdings, no doubt greatly assisted by his position on Annecy's council. Pierre and Louis are recorded as owning a house in the medieval centre of Annecy in 1484, and on 23 April that year Louis purchased properties in the flourishing new district around Notre Dame de Liesse, then considered the 'premier' neighbourhood of Annecy.[7]

This then was the social milieu into which Eustace was born: a provincial middle-class family, probably regarded as enterprising commoners by local nobility, but financially comfortable as long as their properties provided an income and could be mortgaged or sold to raise money. Garrett Mattingly, in his biography of Katherine of Aragon, describes the Chapuys family as 'a clannish, unadventurous breed, sticking stubbornly to small gains, pushing their way by inches up the narrow social ladder of their little native town'.[8] This seems a harsh judgement on a family whose only resources for improving their lot were their wits and careful preservation of their modest financial gains. To this, Ursula Schwarzkopf retorts that as a result of 'the bourgeois persistence … to nag the council into allowing the family to increase its ownership and thereby its prestige … then the family's fortunes grew as the vines in a vineyard'. This is hardly 'pushing their way by inches up the narrow social ladder'.

As for the political and cultural milieu in which the future Imperial ambassador was raised and educated, this was of course that of late fifteenth- to early sixteenth-century Humanism and the Renaissance. The old political, religious and scholarly regimes were coming into question. Old feudal structures were beginning to weaken, city and ducal states were jockeying for power, and the Church of Rome was beginning to struggle to maintain its hold on European society. The shock of the Reformation was about to be unleashed. Scientific and scholarly inquiry were making advances, driven largely by secular men of letters. These men took advantage of Gutenberg's new printing press to distribute and absorb the New Learning and meet demands for works (including religious texts) in vernacular languages rather than Latin. It was to such intellectual influences that the young Eustace was increasingly exposed.

He was to follow a different path from that of his father, who died in 1505 when Eustace was in his early teens. Guigone and her children had inherited property. However, as Louis co-owned some of it with his brother Pierre, Eustace and his family were obliged to sue him for their share.[9] A document dated 26 August 1506 names Eustace and his mother as litigants in the case, and for legal reasons gives the boy's age as more than fourteen and less than twenty-six.

The case against his uncle Pierre took a great financial toll on the family and, while they would not be considered poor, presumably it was not easy to remain financially buoyant.

Louis and Guigone had great ambitions for Eustace and, as was now family tradition, ensured that he was well educated. He was initially educated in Annecy and eventually accepted by the prestigious Turin University. This was the only university in the Duchy of Savoy, and was under the patronage of the duke. It had established a sound reputation for teaching law and was a lively centre of the emerging philosophy of Humanism. Presumably financed by his mother's property earnings in Annecy, Chapuys commenced his studies in Turin on 10 November 1507,[10] a year after the great humanist Desiderius Erasmus graduated there as a Doctor of Divinity. Besides receiving instruction in the civil and canon law, it is likely that Chapuys absorbed a good deal of the New Learning. It seems that he stayed at the university until 1512, then studied in Rome (according to a letter to his brother Philibert). He finally received a doctorate of civil and canon law (*utriusque juris doctor*) in 1515, but whether in Turin or Rome is disputed.[11]

Eustace's movements between 1512 and 1515 are not clear, but we know that at some point he visited Pavia, an intellectual and cultural centre near Milan. The university's school of law attracted students from across Europe. The accounts of an Annecy notary, Christopher Cotens, record the despatch of occasional sums of money to Eustace, sometimes delivered by merchants travelling through Italy, but his exact locations are difficult to determine.[12]

We do know, however, that Eustace's European social circle was impressive. He cultivated a relationship with fellow Turin University student François Bonivard, the Swiss ecclesiastic, historian and religious reformer.[13] At some point Eustace went to Geneva, which was then an important political and religious centre and part of the Duchy of Savoy, where it is thought he was ordained. There he made the acquaintance of Pierre de la Baume, Canon of Geneva and counsel of the dukes of Savoy. Geneva was a crucial stage for Eustace, for it was here that the still relatively young lawyer would prove his work ethic and grasp of political and religious affairs. Most importantly, he would serve his apprenticeship in the art of diplomacy. In 1517, the year that Martin Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses on the door of the Castle church in Wittenberg and launched the Reformation, Chapuys was appointed secretary to the Prince-Bishop of Geneva, Jean de Savoie (a cousin and appointee of the Duke of Savoy, Charles III), and made a canon of Geneva cathedral. His legal studies had prepared him well for such a career; he was possibly supported by his maternal uncle, Jean Dupuys, and his cousin, Anthoine Chapuys de Puplinge,

who was already a ducal councillor.[14] Eustace could now presumably send money home to help support his mother and siblings. He became an integral part of the episcopal administration of Geneva, and well reputed as an eloquent orator and Latin stylist. He gained valuable experience conducting conciliatory diplomatic missions to a number of Swiss cities, including Fribourg and Bern. A daunting task indeed given that they favoured Savoy's rival, the House of Habsburg, to which belonged the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain, Charles V.

Pierre de la Baume succeeded Jean de Savoie as Bishop of Geneva in 1524, and appointed Eustace Dean of Vullionex, a town in the Geneva region – a most providential appointment, from which he retained a modest benefice for the rest of his life. Despite his image in some quarters as a provincial conservative Catholic, Eustace developed and maintained friendships with religious reformers as well as humanists during this period – 'political firebrands and disreputable humanists', as Mattingly puts it – a nuance of his personality often overlooked. His friendship with the reform-minded Bonivard endured throughout the Reformation. Chapuys' support of Katherine of Aragon and opposition to Anne Boleyn has so often been construed as a mark of his opposition to Luther and the English Reformation. However – looking ahead for a moment – it could be argued that Chapuys was opposed to the *manner* in which Henry sought to reform the Church, and how the Boleyns made use of religion and the religious divide.

There are other examples of Eustace's intellectual eclecticism, in particular his relationship with the German reformer, humanist, literary scholar and researcher of the occult, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa. They first met at Pavia between 1512 and 1515. While in Italy, Agrippa broadened and expanded his scholarship in occult philosophies, heavily influenced by the humanist tradition, and found inspiration in Cabalistic texts as well as Neoplatonic and Hermetic studies. Agrippa lectured at Pavia and Turin, where Eustace had studied. Alas, the established scholar would have had little time at first for the young student. However, Agrippa failed to secure a permanent position at either Turin or Pavia, and by 1517 was considering moving to Geneva. A friend offered to secure him a house, and remarked that the most useful contact in Geneva would be Eustace Chapuys, the newly appointed secretary to the Bishop of Geneva.[15] If Agrippa had hitherto ignored Chapuys, the two now became firm friends and corresponded for the rest of their lives. Further evidence of their close bond is the fact that Agrippa appointed Eustace guardian of his son Haymon when Agrippa fled Switzerland.[16]

Again looking ahead, one of the enduring mysteries of Chapuys' personal life concerns his illegitimate son Cesare. Two potential dates

of birth have been put forward: either Cesare was born while Eustace was still a young man in Annecy, between 1510 and 1527/28, or at the end of his first English embassy in 1539. Eustace never referred to him in any of his extant letters to his mother or other family members. In a bundle of letters in the Annecy archives is one page of a Latin Prayer to the Virgin Mary, written sometime after 1510. The writing is clearly that of a child, and this could in fact be the one piece of writing in Cesare's hand. Our other evidence is a letter, written in 1549, now housed in the archives in Annecy, in which Eustace thanks the Mayor of Annecy for his letter of condolence at Cesare's death, and for his kind words at his funeral. The mayor's letter has disappeared from the archives – we can only wonder at the contents – so there are no details from which we can put together a portrait of Cesare. Eustace makes no mention of Cesare's age, his mother, or the cause of death. However, we can work backwards in order to piece together a fraction of the picture.

Eustace's letter is not a perfunctory gesture; he was distraught by his son's death, which not only implies a close connection between the two but also that it may have been sudden. For the mayor to have written a letter personally praising Cesare and lamenting his death, we can deduce that Cesare was either born and raised in Annecy or was still living there at the time of his death. It would be unusual for the mayor to write to Eustace personally unless he knew Cesare, or unless Cesare held an important position in Annecy. I would argue that of the two dates put forward of his birth, we can disregard 1539, as there is the suggestion of a young man in the letter rather than a child. Even more persuasive evidence can be found in his letters to his mother from Brussels in 1539, in which he complains that his plan to visit her in Annecy are continuously thwarted by Mary of Hungary who refused to part with him. Eustace would not see his mother or Annecy again, so Cesare was most likely conceived before his father's first embassy, perhaps even during his time in Geneva.

A new career path for Eustace opened when relations deteriorated between Charles III, Duke of Savoy, and his loyal Genevan bishop, Pierre de la Baume. The Savoyards and the Habsburgs had been at war for decades, and by 1522 Geneva's burghers were eager to escape Savoyard control and enter an alliance with the Habsburgs. When they attempted an alliance with the Habsburg city of Fribourg, the duke threatened to take possession of Geneva. Eustace had been active in Genevan politics as part of the episcopal administration and was most concerned about the duke's threat, with good cause, as the duke had executed the Bishop of Geneva's vicar for treason in 1519.[17] Chapuys retreated to the safety of Annecy (and possibly to Cesare's mother) in 1521, returning to Geneva the following year. By 1524, the tension

between the Duke of Savoy and Geneva's pro-independence faction was close to breaking point as Emperor Charles V began increasing the Imperial military presence in the city.

Bishop de la Baume now appointed Eustace as the ecclesiastical representative of the Genevan Savoyards, led by the bishop and the Duke of Savoy, in mediations with the commander of the Imperial army, Charles III, Duke of Bourbon. Charles had originally served the French king, Francis I, but after a dispute he switched allegiance to the Holy Roman Emperor.[18]

Chapuys' new role testifies to the trust and confidence he had earned among the political elites and royal personages. To delve into his new missions would embroil us too much in the minute detail of Bourbon/Habsburg relations and divert us from Eustace the man. However, needless to say, they would have required judicious diplomacy, strategic and tactical thinking, subterfuge and, most importantly, patience. These attributes he would need to hone in preparation for his greatest challenge, the post of Imperial ambassador to the Tudor court.

Chapuys concluded his Genevan career in 1525 by taking on a legal challenge by the Genevans. They tried to repel what they saw as an attempt to encroach on their lands by the Council of Chambéry, the capitol of Savoy. Chapuys excelled, and in August 1526, at the age of thirty-seven, he accepted the Duke of Bourbon's offer to appoint him the duke's personal representative to Emperor Charles V's court at Granada, Spain. Chapuys first appearance in English sources was in September 1526 when he assured the English ambassador to the Duke of Bourbon's court of the duke's devotion to English interests. Throughout the winter of 1526/7 Chapuys travelled with the Imperial court and its army around Europe, earning a pension of four ducats a day from the Holy Roman Emperor's household, presumably for his expenses as the Duke of Bourbon's ambassador. When Bourbon was killed leading Charles V's army at the sack of Rome on 6 May 1527, Charles took Chapuys into the Imperial service. He appointed him a remunerated councillor and master of requests (*maître des requêtes*).[19] This was a most advantageous position, essentially a councillor of state, normally tasked with receiving petitions to Charles V and helping supervise legal matters. The son of a humble Annecy notary was now serving the Holy Roman Emperor. Chapuys' particular patron was a Frenchman of humble background, Nicholas Perrenot de Granvelle, formerly the secretary to Margaret of Austria, who was Countess of Burgundy and Governor of the Low Countries. Margaret was also an aunt of Charles V. De Granvelle was right-hand man to, and eventually succeeded, Mercurino Arborio Marchese di Gattinara, Grand Chancellor to Charles V, who would prove a most fortunate and

lifelong contact. The next two years of Chapuys' service to the Holy Roman Emperor provided numerous opportunities to study the diverse and complex responsibilities of his master. Without a great deal of information from this time, we can surmise that, as one of the secretaries to the Imperial Council, he would have assisted in the preparation of legal opinions.

The year 1529 would mark a turning point in Anglo–Imperial diplomacy, and in Chapuys' career. In May, Emperor Charles V's ambassador to England, Spanish nobleman and clergyman Inigo de Mendoza, asked Charles to recall him after only two and a half years in London. His mission had failed and he was in poor health. Charles V chose Eustace Chapuys to replace him.

Mendoza's ambassadorship had not begun auspiciously.[20] While en route to London in 1526 to take up his position, the French, keen to obstruct Anglo–Imperial relations, arrested Mendoza. He was jailed in Arques for several months on trumped-up charges of being an enemy spy, despite an earlier French promise of safe conduct. Once in London, Mendoza's responsibility had been to support the queen, Katherine of Aragon, who was also Charles's aunt, against Henry VIII's attempt to discard her in favour of Anne Boleyn. His mission was also to promote an English alliance with Spain and the Holy Roman Emperor (who were one and the same) at the expense of France. He had been frustrated in the former task and thwarted in the latter.

Much of this was the result of Tudor scheming. He was prevented from meeting with Katherine alone and even from communicating with her except to relay news of her family. On the other hand, it could be said that Mendoza lacked the essential skills of a diplomat. He blustered, protested, complained and, fatally for a diplomat, let his anger and frustration cloud his judgement. Instead of cultivating relationships with the most powerful men at court, Mendoza stubbornly fought them. He could not keep abreast of Henry's shrewd councillors and was certainly no match for Henry's chief advisor, the ambitious, brilliant-minded father figure to Henry, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey. Admittedly, Mendoza served at possibly the worst time in terms of Anglo–Imperial relations. Negotiations between England and Spain were breaking down mainly due to the fact that both nations sought to ally with France against each other. There was another more significant obstacle: Wolsey's ambition was to succeed the aging Pope Clement VII, Guilio de Giuliano de' Medici. However, to achieve this supreme position, he needed powerful supporters, and Charles V would have been the ultimate ally. Shrewdly, Wolsey supported Charles in his political and family endeavours, trusting that he in return would receive Imperial support in succeeding Pope Clement. Alas, greatly miscalculating his situation, Charles V backed

another candidate, Alessandro Farnese, who would become Pope Paul III. With his greatest ambition thwarted, Wolsey naturally took the affront to heart, and Imperial ambassador Mendoza felt the brunt of his wrath.

We can clearly see in Mendoza's letters to Charles that Wolsey ran rings around him and made it his personal mission to make the ambassador's life difficult. The most effective and offensive way to do this was to have Mendoza's letters opened and read. There are several instances in his communications where the ambassador, sounding frazzled, claims letters have not reached him, or is furious that his letters have not reached Charles, completely unaware of the real cause. His social connections also worked to damage him, especially his relationship with Juan Luis Vives, a Spanish humanist scholar and confidant of Queen Katherine, who was brought to the court as tutor to Katherine's daughter, Princess Mary.

Vives and Mendoza were put under house arrest by Wolsey in 1528, when England was technically at war with the Holy Roman Emperor. This isolated them from Katherine and the court, and kept them in the dark about developments in the King's Great Matter (Henry's wish to divorce) and the English policy of favouring Francis over Charles. Vives was interrogated about his communications with Mendoza, particularly regarding his dealings with Katherine and his communications with the Pope. It was becoming clear to Katherine that her would-be defender Mendoza was as much a prisoner as she. It must have been a desolate time for her when Mendoza asked to be recalled and finally left England. Whatever his failures, he had been the only, albeit tenuous, link with the Spanish empire and her family. Katherine was now desperate for an advocate who could develop a network of allies, someone with charm but adept at subterfuge who would champion her interests while cultivating relationships with the power brokers of the court. She needed someone with legal and canonical training, since the arguments surrounding the marital status of Henry VIII and Katherine now involved legal questions. Above all, he must not be a Spaniard, who would be immediately distrusted. As for Charles, he needed someone with diplomatic shrewdness, experience and cool reasoning under pressure to steer relations between him and England.

Chapuys ticked all of these boxes. He was now an accomplished forty-year-old (or thereabouts) Savoyard canon and civil lawyer, with more than a decade of legal and diplomatic experience in the hothouse of European courts; he possessed useful high-level contacts and had humanist leanings but was a sufficiently devout Catholic. He was by all accounts charming but had a steely disposition and could scheme almost as well as Wolsey. In short he was the ideal

ambassador for the task, and few men in Imperial service could equal him. Katherine often commended Chapuys to her nephew, the Holy Roman Emperor, on one occasion writing that

> you could not have chosen a better ambassador, his wisdom encourages and comforts me, and when my councillors through fear hesitate to answer the charges against me, he is always ready to undertake the burden of my defence. He pays the most careful attention to all my affairs and I consider him deserving of all your favour.[21]

Praise indeed from the increasingly unwanted queen.

Chapuys was living in Barcelona when his credentials were issued on 19 May 1529. He had already been put to work under Nicholas Perrenot de Granvelle's direction on the 'divorce' between Henry and Katherine. He showed he had mastered the relevant arguments in negotiations in April 1529 on Charles's behalf, with Henry VIII's representatives. Now his instructions were to advise Katherine and promote Spain's and the Holy Roman Emperor's cause with the Tudor court.

The original letter in French from Charles to Chapuys, thought to be lost, was discovered in 1951 among the archives of the parish of Duingt in Haute-Savoie. Below is the rather stilted English version now held in the Annecy archives:

> Instructions to you, Sire Eustache Chappuis, doctor in law, our Counsellor and Master for the ordinary demands of our Home, about what we will want you to do in England where we are sending you.
>
> First of all, hurry to travel, in the best and most decent conditions. When you will arrive in England, ask for our ambassador Don Ynigo de Mendoça, bishop of Bourgos, who will take you to your place. We will write to him to ask him to help you with your accommodation and any other thing. If the ambassador, according to what he wrote to us, has already left in order to come back to us, ask if Madam the archduchess, our good Aunt, has sent anyone to England to act as an ambassador or solicitor in the meantime. If there is someone like that ask him about the current matters that you are supposed to take care of. If possible, ask for the advice and wish of the Queen of England, our dear Aunt. If you can talk to her first, tell her what your mission about her matter is. We will write to her a letter of recommendation for you so that she will talk to you about this matter or any other subject in confidence. You will for this matter talk to whoever it is necessary to talk to and that you can trust.
>
> When you'll know more about the purpose of your mission, give the letters we wrote and gave you, to our dear Uncle and

good Brother, the King of England, and tell him: that he has been warned by his ambassadors and by the ones that have been sent to us by our Aunt the Queen, of our response and tell him what has been done with them following the demand and sending to England of the message regarding the wedding between the King and our Aunt the Queen.

It has never been our intention to be firm about the matter and to get that involved. The justice about the matter, important as it is and related to the ecclesiastic power and apostolic authority, has to be known and decided by the Pope and the apostolic Holy See. And according to the counsel, we couldn't not act in the way said before, and suggest and expose the facts as it has been done, as the Queen's people had the mission to come protest to us as they did, with the message and instruction to do so;

We believe the king is so virtuous, careful and reasonable that he will take well what we did and do to defend the right of our Aunt and that he will agree that if the matter will go before the Court, it will be known and decided in Rome and not in England for the true and entire satisfaction of the parties' conscience. Also the King, by his magnanimity, will respect the fact that because of the duty of relationship and singular love that we always had and have for our Aunt like we would have for our mother, and also for our Cousin their daughter, we couldn't not help, favour, advise and defend their cause by all legal and reasonable means. And he shouldn't hold it against us as he told us that the request he did was only to know if the marriage between him and the Queen is valid or not, for the satisfaction and guarantee of his conscience. And if we firmly think that he wants more the favour and the proof of the marriage than differently. That to please him, if before we could and can and to make it sure, we have willingly, regardless of the previously mentioned offers and excuses, showed to the ambassadors this message sane and entire and without any suspicion or vice, and we gave them the copy of it, with the true original one, where it says that the King is allowed to ask for advice and fully determine, satisfy and remove any scruples that could be linked to the marriage, and with the calm of his conscience, keep living in this marriage.

If he can take our request into consideration. It is a request done by someone who more than anyone else wants his prosperity, honour and good and for his relatives, and who truly and loyally wants to keep having and develop a friendship with him, and that he will always find him keen for it and working for it. Adding to that, according to the substance and for this purpose, all the good words that by your care, discretion and

dexterity, you will say to touch him and influence him not to get the divorce and to go back to our Aunt and to be reconciled with her. Without trying too hard and debate too much over the subject of the divorce, the validity or not of it, your mission is only to convince him in a friendly way without involving the rigour of the justice. Also if, regardless of all the persuasions, we would need to go to justice in Rome and nowhere else, and by debating the subject and its advantages, we hope it will tacitly be shown and proven the hope of the contrary, and advise or annoy the King and his people out of the question and without reason. If someone talks to you about our trip to Italy, tell him that we came here to see if it is right and necessary to decide this trip; in intent and entire decision about it, to want the pacification of Italy and the extrication of the errors daily happening and proliferating, the rejection of the Turcq, the elation of our holy faith, the support of the Church authority, the good and rest of the entire Christendom by the good way, the opinion and advice of our Holy Father the Pope and the apostolic Holy See, about which we hope the King will be helpful and will do the right thing.

Regarding the Most Reverend Cardinal «Eboracensis» (Wolsey), you will tell him that by working for the good of the previously said things, namely the end of the attempt of divorce and the establishment and conservation of our friendship with the King, and for the good, peace and rest of the Christendom, we will be his good and true friend; you will by any honest and reasonable means discretely try to find out what him and other good people of England feel about us and the previously mentioned friendship and if necessary convince them. If there is the question of truce with the King and Kingdom of France, you can tell him that as we already told his ambassadors, it doesn't suit our concerns, country and people; however, Madam the Archduchess our Aunt will know what to do according to the demand. And regarding the matters of our countries beyond, you will do and provide everything that our Aunt will tell you about and request and depending on the opportunity, time and demand, you will tell us quickly about anything regarding our service, as we believe in you loyalty, caution and good diligence.[22]

On his way to assuming his new post in London, Chapuys visited Mendoza in Antwerp for a thorough briefing. We have no record of what was discussed, but, for Chapuys, it must have been an eye-opening account of the frustrations and perils of life at the Tudor court. Chapuys would have carefully filed away Mendoza's accounts of Katherine's situation, England's alliance with France, and the

characters and factional alliances of the English nobles and courtiers, and of Henry himself.

Mendoza no doubt wished Chapuys luck. He would need more than that.

The New Imperial Ambassador at Henry's Court

> *I was very far from thinking that Your Majesty would ever use force or assume authority, and I was also quite certain that you had no intention of making war. I could not imagine that the King would ever give due cause for it.*
>
> Chapuys, to Charles V, 1530

Chapuys arrived in London in late August 1529 to find the King's Great Matter – Henry's desire to end his union with the aging Katherine of Aragon and marry young Anne Boleyn – still unresolved but being widely discussed. One of Chapuys' first reports to the Holy Roman Emperor confirms what all at court were discussing: 'The King's affection for La Bulang [Boleyn] increases daily; it is so great just now that it can hardly be greater, such is the intimacy and familiarity in which they live at present.'[1]

Most of Chapuys' ambassadorial instructions were what we might expect: trade and financial matters, smoothing relations between Henry and Charles, dealing with Imperial pensions to certain English nobles, countering the influence of the French. He was charged with exploring alliances – in particular, conveying the Holy Roman Emperor's urgent appeal for English military and financial assistance against the Ottoman expansion into Europe. In addition, he was instructed to help reconcile Henry and Katherine by using his extensive legal abilities and the Holy Roman Emperor's no less extensive diplomatic resources in Rome and elsewhere. Charles urged his ambassador to achieve all this within the framework of *doulceur et amitié*, sweetness and friendship. It was a tough assignment, and Chapuys soon found Katherine's matters overwhelming his diplomatic tasks.

Chapuys would have taken pleasure in noting that Mendoza's nemesis, the once powerful Lord Chancellor Cardinal Wolsey, now languished in disgrace; he had failed to persuade Pope Clement VII to end the royal marriage. He also had failed first to cajole, then to bully Katherine into acquiescing, or at least into exchanging her temporal husband for a divine one by retreating to a nunnery. His push for a lasting alliance with France against Charles was in tatters. He was loathed not only by Anne for his tardiness in securing a divorce, but by senior courtiers for his low birth, arrogant ambition and influence over the king. He was despised by much of London's populace for his enormous wealth and his earlier role in raising taxes. All this Chapuys would have learned from Mendoza.

Henry was thirty-eight and Katherine six years older. Their twenty-

nine years of marriage had produced only one living heir, Princess Mary, but Henry and his nobles (and probably most of his subjects) believed that only a son would achieve a smooth and uncontested royal succession. Mary, being a princess, would most likely have to marry a foreign prince or ruler, possibly placing England under alien rule. At six, Mary had been betrothed to the twenty-two-year-old Emperor Charles under the 1522 Treaties of Windsor between him and England – not the first or last time she was used as a diplomatic spoil. However, Charles, keen to marry and start a family, broke off the engagement three years later and married Isabella, daughter of King Manuel I of Portugal. Henry was mightily offended.

Whether from heartfelt moral doubt, or anxiety for a new wife who could deliver healthy boys, and probably from both motives combined, Henry was arguing that his lack of a male child, and Katherine's miscarriages and stillborn or short-lived babies, was divine punishment. As Katherine was his dead brother Arthur's widow, Henry contended that their marriage had violated an Old Testament prohibition of such a union in the Book of Leviticus: 'If a man takes his brother's wife, it is impurity … they shall be childless.'[2]

A woman's sexual relations with a man were said to create an 'affinity' between her and the man's brother, which formed an impediment to her marrying the brother after her husband's death. All knew that Pope Julius II had issued a papal bull of dispensation, dated 1503, licensing Henry's union with Katherine, and that its wording had allowed for the *possibility* that Katherine and Arthur had consummated their marriage. However, Henry, urged on by ecclesiastical advisers whose interest no doubt lay in telling the king what he wanted to hear, suggested that the dispensation might have been beyond the Pope's authority or defective in some other way. Thus in 1527 Henry appealed to Pope Clement VII to release him from 'sin' by ending the marriage (as popes had done for other European royalty), and allow him to marry someone 'lawfully'. The Levitican prohibition is contradicted by a passage in Deuteronomy that actually *requires* a man to marry, and have children with, his dead brother's wife if she is childless, but no one seemed to press this point.

Katherine was of course outraged and suspected that Wolsey was behind the plot (he was certainly helping it). She assured Henry and his advisers that their marriage was holy and valid because she and the sickly fifteen-year-old Arthur had never consummated their union; thus she was a virgin when she married Henry. Katherine's point was: no sex, then no affinity, and thus no impediment, and therefore Henry's fears were groundless, even if Julius II's dispensation *was* faulty.

The view of Henry and Wolsey, who was the papal legate (or

representative) in England, was simple: one pope had allowed the marriage, so another pope could disallow it. Had they been less parochially minded and less arrogant in their assumptions, they would have realised that Katherine would not go quietly. She was a Spanish princess, proud daughter of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, the power couple who had driven the Moors from Spain and founded an empire in Europe and the Americas. Katherine was also the maternal aunt of Charles, the Holy Roman Emperor and most powerful man in Europe. She had appealed to him for help, although England and France had formed an alliance against him in 1527. She possessed considerable steel, and was not about to humiliate herself in the eyes of Europe and convert her daughter Mary from a princess to a bastard. She was determined not to let go of Henry, to whom she remained devoted. She contemptuously rejected Wolsey's pleas that she accept a divorce to save Henry, the Pope, and of course Wolsey himself all this inconvenient bother. Instead, Katherine fought with all her intelligence and religious commitment to protect her position as wife and queen. She had one powerful advocate: her nephew, and his new ambassador to the Tudor court was about to test whether that power could save Katherine.

Just before Chapuys' arrival, while Henry and Wolsey were questioning Julius II's bull of dispensation, Katherine received some persuasive ammunition. It was a transcript of a brief of dispensation, also by Julius II and dated 1503, and also licensing Henry and Katherine's marriage. The document, retrieved from a former ambassador's files in Spain, was worded differently from the bull. It assumed Arthur and Katherine *had* consummated their marriage, and stated that the brief permitting the marriage was issued on the grounds of confirming the friendship between Spain and England and to prevent possible war. It posed a greater threat to Henry's case than the bull of dispensation, as it unequivocally implied that carnal relations between Arthur and Katherine (which Katherine still adamantly denied) were no impediment to her marriage to Henry. An edgy Wolsey demanded that Katherine immediately ask Charles to have the original brief sent to Henry, so its authenticity could be checked. However, Katherine told Charles to ignore this demand, fearing that once in Wolsey's hands the document would mysteriously vanish. Charles sent Wolsey a properly notarised copy of the brief, which should have satisfied any impartial ecclesiastical court – if only one had existed in England. However, Henry rejected it and insisted that Charles hand over the original.

Chapuys would have been aware of the complicated issues he faced. Some were political, such as the constantly shifting alliances among England, France, Charles and the Pope, in which numerous

peace treaties had been signed and broken. Wolsey's request that the Pope end the marriage remained in limbo, largely because Charles had pressed Clement VII to decide the issue in Rome. The cautious Clement had been the Holy Roman Emperor's virtual captive in 1527–8, after Imperial forces violently sacked Rome, and was not keen to provoke another Imperial intervention by humiliating Charles's aunt. In any case, granting Henry a divorce would set a dangerous precedent by contradicting Julius II's original dispensation.[3]

Other issues were religious. The Reformation – Lutheranism or evangelicalism as it was then called – was gaining adherents across Europe. Reformist books and essays attacking papal power and the great priestly edifice of the Church were evading the bans imposed by rulers and the clergy. As Chapuys would have observed, these works were finding a sympathetic audience in England, even at Henry's court. Some, such as William Tyndale's *The Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528), argued that the Church had usurped the loyalty and obedience that belonged by divine right to monarchs. This claim, however heretical, is said to have impressed Henry. The Church reacted defensively to this poisoning of its grass roots, condemning the 'heretics' to hellfire, standing unwavering on canon law and biblical tradition, and warily avoiding compromises that would weaken its authority.

In 1528 the latest armed tussle between France and the Holy Roman Emperor for control of Italy saw the French army of Francis I (who had an alliance with England) and the forces of the Holy Roman Emperor (with whom England was technically at war) fighting each other to a standstill in northern Italy. This emboldened Clement to defy Charles's wishes and accept Wolsey's request that the question of a divorce be investigated in England, first by a secret commission, then by a public tribunal – a legatine court – in London. Wolsey hoped this would lessen the possibility of any verdict being appealed in Rome. Clement appointed Wolsey as the papal legate, along with a special legate from Rome, Cardinal Campeggio, to try the case. While it would supposedly decide the issue once and for all, Campeggio's instructions were to delay the sitting, then delay its reaching a conclusion. When the case finally opened on 31 May 1529, it was clear that the witnesses and proceedings were stacked against Katherine, with only Bishop John Fisher making it clear to everyone that, unlike his fellow bishops, he did not support the king's claims.[4] Henry and Katherine earnestly pleaded their cases for and against divorce respectively, and Katherine boldly challenged Henry to state publicly whether or not she had been a virgin when they married. Whether out of fear of perjury, or deference to Katherine's modesty, or perhaps because his memory of marital events twenty years ago was

now blurred, Henry did not answer. Campeggio and Wolsey adjourned the trial on July 23, and it never reconvened. The previous month, Imperial forces had defeated the French at Landriano, resulting in a peace treaty between Charles and Clement (the Treaty of Barcelona), and one between Charles and Francis I, which was sealed by the Ladies Peace at Cambrai. These treaties left England isolated diplomatically, a further blow to Wolsey's foreign policy. Now that he was once again within the Holy Roman Emperor's power, Clement took the step that Charles and Katherine had been seeking and Wolsey dreading: he transferred the divorce case to Rome for trial. Such was the unfolding drama into which Chapuys stepped in late August.[5]

The Catholic Church did not (and still does not) permit divorce dissolving a valid marriage, but did (and still does) permit divorce when the marriage had never existed or the union was invalid. This is what Henry sought, but it seems best to follow the convention among Tudor historians of using 'divorce' when referring to Henry's demands.

With Lutheranism seeping into England, Wolsey had warned Gregory Casale, a diplomat who represented Henry to the papacy, that the king would be driven to adopt any remedy necessary, even one which might be injurious to the Pope. These remedies, Wolsey said, were often instilled into the royal mind.[6] This was as much a warning to Wolsey as to the Pope; the cardinal knew the likely consequences for his own career if he failed to satisfy the king's desires. It must be said that Henry expected the near-impossible from Wolsey. Unlike Thomas Cromwell, whom Henry later gave free reign to 'think outside the box', Wolsey had to argue for a divorce largely on theological grounds, such as the prohibition in Leviticus. By early 1529, his enemies, including Anne and the steadily rising Boleyn family, were accusing him of deliberately stalling,[7] and he was no longer welcomed at court as warmly as before.[8]

The English had been awaiting the new Imperial ambassador with some curiosity, no doubt hoping he would be as malleable as Mendoza – a hope that would soon be dashed. Chapuys initially spoke little or no English, and in face-to-face conversations would rely on French, which was spoken by anyone of note at court, or on Latin when necessary. Chapuys did learn English during his term in England, possibly becoming more fluent than he cared to let on. However, initially he would have to rely on bilingual speakers to report any relevant conversations and documents in English.

Charles had written to his aunt Katherine ahead of Chapuys' arrival, hoping 'that he may in my name try to persuade the King, my good brother, to ease his conscience and cast off any scruples and doubts he may have about the legitimacy of his marriage with you.'[9] Katherine was therefore understandably anxious to meet the man who

would pursue her cause, as well as manage the currently troubled Anglo–Imperial relations.

Chapuys was granted his first meeting with the king at a dinner on 21 September, about a month after reaching England. While awaiting Henry's arrival fresh from the hunt, Chapuys was entertained by Thomas Boleyn, Earl of Wiltshire, and George Boleyn, Anne's father and brother respectively. We can only guess at Chapuys' first thoughts of these close relatives of the woman who, in his view, was plunging England into turmoil and causing Katherine such grief.

According to Chapuys' account, Thomas worked hard to flatter him, and stressed that Henry's overwhelming love for Charles meant that Henry would give anything, even his fortune, to convince him of his goodwill and affection.[10] Perhaps Thomas, and Henry himself, thought the new ambassador would be easily flattered, as was Mendoza. However, Chapuys was entirely different from his unworldly and sometimes short-sighted predecessor, and Thomas was an intelligent and educated man, a humanist like Chapuys and a skilled diplomat. He would have quickly surmised that the new ambassador was no fool, and would recognise polite flattery and hyperbole for what they were. Chapuys' first reports on the Boleyns, including Anne, are positive, without the malice or hostility that he has often been accused of. It seems he was fully prepared to experience open hostility from *them* on his arrival, considering his master was Katherine's nephew,[11] but in fact they were largely friendly, while the claim that *he* was hostile towards them is simply a myth that has unfortunately stuck.

Chapuys' most detailed letter of this first audience with Henry was not to Charles, but to the Archduchess Margaret of Savoy, Regent of the Low Countries and paternal aunt of Charles V. Charles was on the move, travelling to Italy to be crowned Holy Roman Emperor by the Pope, a gesture of reconciliation for the violent sack of Rome in 1527 by Charles's troops and mercenaries. Margaret's court at Mechelen in Belgium was one of the most progressive in Europe; it was here that Anne Boleyn had received the most significant part of her European education, which made her stand out from all the other women at the English court.

Chapuys tells Margaret that his first audience with the king went well, although he notes that Henry was in a rush to dine before resuming hunting and hawking for the afternoon. Chapuys draws a fine sketch of the robust thirty-eight-year-old monarch, almost Chapuys' age, who danced, wooed, hunted and dined almost daily, perhaps leaving the affairs of state to the new men in charge – the Boleyns and Howards, Anne's maternal kin – just as he had done for so many years with Wolsey.

Chapuys quickly got to the point, broaching the subject of the king's wish for a divorce. He wrote with some amusement that Henry attempted to convince him that he was learned in canon law, and had carefully studied the case, alleging reasons and producing arguments in his favour. Chapuys decided, for brevity's sake, and possibly because he did not want to sport with Margaret's intelligence, to omit the details of Henry's monologue.[12] Before dashing back to his sports, the king granted Chapuys' request to visit Katherine. The ambassador was of course aware that the king kept his queen and his mistress under one roof, though Chapuys does not mention these arrangements in his report.

Although Chapuys often embellished his reports with details of someone's appearance, dress and perceived state of mind, his account of his first meeting with Katherine is disappointingly perfunctory.

> I went on to explain the substance of my instructions, and the conversation I had had with the King, her husband, and what I myself had replied to the King's arguments. She seemed very glad, and said that I could not have expressed more in her favour; but that the room being full of people at the time, she could do no more than express her gratitude and assure me that an ambassador from the Emperor at such a time was a great comfort in the midst of her tribulations.[13]

Katherine was also considering her own campaign. Soon after their first meeting she urged Chapuys to call on Cardinal Campeggio before he returned to Rome. Katherine also confirmed that Wolsey was no longer in favour, and cautioned him that any letters from the ambassador to Wolsey should remain undelivered until the situation became clearer. 'For although he has been long asking permission to re-appear at Court,'[14] Chapuys reported to Charles,

> I have at last obtained it through Campeggio's influence, it is now certain that he will not trouble the Court as he did before, for already on my first arrival in London it was definite that his opponents are now in power, [and those] of whom I have spoken in former despatches, are to reside at Court, and that he (Wolsey) is to remain at his country seat, three miles away, and not to come unless sent for.[15]

Katherine had assured Chapuys that Henry had been kinder to her recently, but she urged the ambassador to remind Henry whenever he could that the Holy Roman Emperor was taking a great interest in the affair. That was her ace, and as threatening as Katherine dared to go. However, she was subtle when it suited her: she advised the ambassador to keep up the flow of flattering and conciliatory words, as Henry was more amenable to persuasion than threats.[16] After twenty years of marriage to Henry, Katherine knew him well; Anne

Boleyn, as we will see, preferred to threaten to leave Henry when things did not go her way. She had much to learn about his nature.

Though Chapuys managed these occasional exchanges with the queen, he faced the same problem as Mendoza in effecting regular, confidential two-way communication. Chapuys illustrates this. The queen sent him a message through her Spanish physician, Fernando de Victoria, to say that for now he should correspond with her via the physician. However, any confidence Chapuys had in physician's discretion was shattered when, while being escorted by members of Henry's household, he was accosted by the man in the middle of a busy London street. Chapuys reported that the foolhardy doctor 'proceeded to business, making a summary of what had occurred in the case, the origin and causes of it'.[17] One can imagine the mortified ambassador uncomfortably glancing between the physician and his escorts, who would certainly report the encounter. The man also advised the ambassador, in the full hearing of the escorts, that Katherine was anxious that Chapuys 'consider and calculate the best means of promoting the advocation of [her] cause to Rome, inasmuch as the King, her husband … opposed it violently'.[18]

Chapuys quickly discerned the power-players at court and arranged to meet one of the more prominent, Anne's uncle, Thomas Howard, 3rd Duke of Norfolk. Their meeting at the duke's lodgings was crucial to setting the tone of Chapuys' ambassadorship, as he knew Norfolk would report his impressions of the Imperial ambassador to the court and to Henry, whose only audience with Chapuys so far had been brief and informal. In a lengthy letter to Charles, Chapuys advised that

> the administration of affairs had fallen into the hands of the Duke of Nolphocq [Norfolk] … the issue of affairs of the Cardinal having now moreover reached its crisis, who on the festival of St Luke the Evangelist, was himself, so to speak, dis-evangelised, set aside and deprived of the office of Chancellor.[19]

Chapuys reports that his first encounter with Norfolk appeared to be mutually satisfactory. His purported reason for visiting Norfolk was to urge him to persuade the king to join the Holy Roman Emperor in fighting the Ottoman Turks. The armies of Suleiman I had invaded Charles's territory and the previous month begun besieging the Habsburg capital, Vienna. After raising this issue, Chapuys moved to 'the unhappy differences' between Henry and the queen. Chapuys then pointedly observed that Charles believed that the duke, 'as a true Knight', however strongly and favourably he might be constrained by family considerations (Norfolk was after all Anne Boleyn's uncle), would act 'as honour virtue, and conscience would direct' – in other words, in Katherine's favour.[20]

Norfolk might equally have asked to what extent Chapuys' master was influenced by *his* family considerations, namely his relationship to Katherine. However, he remarked that it was wholly a matter of law and conscience which the king had left in the hands of 'Ecclesiastics, of Doctors and other learned people, of whom a large portion had been found to pronounce against the validity of the existing marriage'.[21]

He added that the king believed that Charles's contrary view was wrong. Norfolk then remarked that if Charles had not so explicitly taken the part of the queen, but had remained neutral, the affair would probably have already been brought to a satisfactory issue.[22] Norfolk was referring to Charles's pressure on the Pope to reject Wolsey's appeals for a divorce, and by 'satisfactory issue' he could only have meant a divorce. Taking this report of Chapuys' to Charles at face value, we see the ambassador, a true professional, tactically advancing and retreating during the conversation with Norfolk, drawing him out, and knowing when to press a point and when not. Probably aware from Mendoza that a faction of nobles had always resented the influence of the low-born and domineering Wolsey, Chapuys, an educated commoner himself, briefly played sycophant to the English aristocrat, remarking that 'the management of affairs would now fall into the hands of men better fitted by their birth and nobility to promote the happiness and honour of the king and kingdom'.[23]

Chapuys added that Charles placed more confidence in Norfolk than anyone else in England, to which Norfolk modestly replied that the affairs of state were conducted not by any one person but by the king's Privy Council, in which he himself assisted.

Chapuys also promptly set about making the acquaintance of the ambassadors from France and the Italian states. His exceptional recollection of names, conversations, and detailed backgrounds of particular courtiers in these first few weeks is impressive, but a degree of cynicism soon creeps into his letters, particularly in his description of other embassies. Towards the end of the letter recounting his conversation with Norfolk, he complains to Charles that 'there is not a single person about the king who is not "saturated" with money from France; almost everyone professes great affection for your Majesty, but the affection for money surpasses all others; alas there is not much reliance to be placed on their professions'.[24]

Chapuys' first foray into the tangled web of the Tudor court had been a success. But while he seems to have impressed the Duke of Norfolk, as well as Thomas and George Boleyn, the real test would be Henry and his councillors, to whom he soon formally presented his credentials and ambassadorial brief. Prior to this encounter, he was

visited by a member of the Privy Council, Robert Henneage, who ostensibly came to help Chapuys find comfortable quarters and provide post horses, but clearly had another agenda. Chapuys, ever organised, had already secured both lodgings and transport, and declined the offer. Henneage, robbed of his pretext, rather clumsily asked Chapuys outright exactly what his mission was, assuring Chapuys that he would hear of it anyway. The ambassador retorted, 'Then you can wait until you hear it in council.'[25]

Henneage tried a different tactic, telling the ambassador that Henry wanted to know whether he wished to discuss his mission publicly before the Privy Council or privately before the king, and whether in Latin or French. Aware that Henry was testing him, Chapuys replied that the king should decide whether it was a private or a public audience, adding that French would be a good choice, for it was his native tongue and, importantly, Henry spoke it well. Chapuys added that his orders were to be as plain and simple as possible and not to employ rhetoric or elegant phrases, such as are generally used in public orations. In fact, a plain and simple presentation would be quite unlike Chapuys: he was renowned for peppering his despatches with biblical and historical references and parables. In one particular report he writes that Charles,

> being so magnanimous a prince, so wise, so prudent, and so reasonable, it would be as absurd for me to deliver in his presence a laudatory oration merely to bring forth facts apparent to common honesty and reason, as it was in that philosopher [whom Chapuys does not name] who in the presence of Hannibal the Carthagenian, discoursed upon military glory and science.[26]

The king, as ever, had been off hunting and met with the two men after morning Mass at Windsor. This time, the setting was more formal, perhaps designed to be intimidating. The king was flanked by his Privy Councillors as he came forward and sat in a large, ornate armchair beneath a small canopy. Chapuys presented Henry with the letter containing his ambassadorial brief from the Holy Roman Emperor but Henry resisted opening it. This allowed the Imperial ambassador to impress Henry with his intelligence, charm and professional acumen.

Chapuys explained his commission in its entirety,[27] after which Henry welcomed the ambassador to England, saying,

> I am very glad and happy to see that since God has been pleased to make peace between the Emperor and myself. The charge of cementing and preserving that very peace has devolved upon a man of your parts, so wise and so well inclined, for if my own information and that communicated by my ambassadors be correct, I have not the least doubt that you will do your best to

preserve the friendship and alliance between your master and myself.[28]

Henry then added what Chapuys understood to be a veiled warning: it was the discretion or indiscretion of ambassadors, he said, that was often the cause of the enmities and quarrels of princes, as it was also the cause of their friendships and alliances. This suggests that Henry suspected Chapuys would prove no mere observer but an active player and supporter of Katherine.

Henry drew the ambassador away from the prying eyes of his council, and, in a hushed and informal tone, attempted to persuade Chapuys of his position on a divorce. Henry no doubt hoped that this aside would be given as much weight in the ambassador's despatches as Henry's formal, more public comments. Henry also referred to his request that Charles send him Julius II's original brief of dispensation, and suggested that Charles was causing more harm than good by keeping it from him. It was the closest Henry had come to a direct criticism of the Holy Roman Emperor. He then said he suspected the brief was a forgery – made of course without Charles's knowledge. Henry said he was doing his best to establish the truth and had ordered a search in Rome without finding any evidence of the document. 'Had the Emperor, your master, sent us the brief of dispensation when we applied for it the whole affair might now be cleared up and decided.'

However, as it remained unresolved, a 'legal' marriage (presuming the present one would be annulled) was out of the question for both Henry and Katherine – as if Katherine, now a mature woman and having been publicly rejected by the King of England, would ever be snapped up by a willing suitor.

To placate Henry and change direction, Chapuys now adopted Katherine's recommended tactic and began praising Henry in lavish terms, admiring his 'talent and skill' for the matters at hand. He then daringly suggested that Henry inwardly approved of Charles's conduct in the entire matter of the divorce. The objections Henry had raised were surely more 'a display of wit and talent' than a serious contradiction or rebuttal of Charles's assertions regarding the papal dispensation. This was bold indeed, and Henry could have exploded. However, Chapuys was a master at drawing people in before verbally assailing them – in the most polite and diplomatic terms of course – then awaiting their reaction. This was the game Chapuys played almost constantly with Henry throughout his fifteen years at the Tudor court. However, when Chapuys attempted to give his personal opinion of the papal brief, the king became somewhat irritated. On this occasion, it is impossible to judge who came out on top, but at last Henry called an end to the exhausting meeting, and invited

Chapuys to meet him when he returned to London, at which time he would be able to give more detailed answers. Reporting the conversation to Charles, Chapuys suggested Henry's claim to be acting from a bad conscience was nonsense, and the desire to cast off Katherine stemmed entirely from 'his own iniquity and malice'.[29]

Henry then ordered Thomas Boleyn to ensure the ambassador was well entertained, and the two men, accompanied by Henneage, spent the evening dining, during which Thomas and Chapuys discussed Charles. Thomas declared that he was pleased about the recent reconciliation between Charles and the Pope, but Chapuys thought this ironic: Thomas would no doubt have preferred, on his daughter Anne's account, that the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor be much less united. Thomas confided that, despite the matter of the divorce, Henry bore Charles no ill will and in fact held him in more affection than anyone could think, imagine, or describe, and declared that he, Thomas, would give anything, even his fortune, to convince Charles that Henry loved him. The ambassador reciprocated by declaring Charles's equally undying affection for Henry, and that Thomas need not sacrifice his impressive fortune for such a matter. The debate over who loved whom the more came to a halt before any more fortunes could be promised. Chapuys was genuinely impressed with Thomas, reporting to Charles that he found him gracious, kind, and affable.[30]

Meanwhile, Wolsey appeared to believe he could reclaim his status if only he could gain access to Henry, a fact that Norfolk, the Boleyns and Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, were well aware of. In September, Wolsey had risked a great deal by contacting Henry directly and requesting an audience, aware that Cardinal Campeggio, whom Wolsey hoped would support him, would soon be returning to Rome. For a man who once wielded ultimate power in the Tudor court, he was now humiliated and told to communicate his concerns in writing. Ever hopeful that he could sway Henry's judgement of him, he travelled to court. However, he hadn't counted on Suffolk. Chapuys reported that Suffolk had deftly contrived events so that, when Wolsey arrived at court, he could not find lodgings anywhere near the king. Campeggio was lodged elsewhere. It was clear to Chapuys that the Howard faction would never allow Wolsey to resume his position at Henry's side.[31]

In the event, neither Wolsey nor Campeggio had delivered a swift decision, and thus neither cardinal was welcome at court. Certainly, Suffolk's outburst during the last sitting of the legatine court was indicative of the growing feeling of tension towards the legatine office, and by extension towards the papal legate to England himself, Wolsey. Chapuys wrote,

> The duke of Suffolk got into a great passion and began to

> swear, and say within hearing of the King himself, of the cardinals, and of all those who had come to that piteous ceremony in order to hear whether the sentence was in favour of the queen or against her 'I see now the truth of what I have heard many people say; never at any time did a papal legate do anything to the profit of England; they have always been, and will hereafter be a calamity and a sore to this country.'[32]

Wolsey retorted that Brandon should have treated him (Wolsey) with more regard, all the more so as he owed his life to the cardinal.[33] Brandon no doubt detested this reminder of his transgression in marrying Henry's sister, Mary Tudor, without Henry's consent. It nearly cost him his head, and it is more than likely that Wolsey's intercession had kept it intact.

Once the Pope had transferred the divorce case to Rome, Henry sought another means of settling the matter in England: on 9 August, weeks before Chapuys' arrival, Henry summoned his peers to a parliament, and ordered the elections of the members of commons.[34]

Known as the Reformation Parliament, it was one of the most important assemblies convened in sixteenth-century England, and Chapuys would monitor its deliberations assiduously over the years it sat. Chapuys was apprehensive of reports that a motion would be made to abolish the legatine office in England, which would in effect sever all ties between the Pope and the English Crown. In fact, the parliament did pass laws that transferred religious authority from the Pope to the English Crown and paved the way for Henry to instigate a programme of social, religious and economic reform. Rumour quickly spread that Parliament would be used to finally bring Wolsey down, something that Henry could not bring himself to do. Chapuys and the French ambassador, Jean du Bellay, had no reason to doubt the rumour.[35] Unfortunately for Wolsey, while he was in one of Henry's ears, Anne Boleyn was in the other. Bellay reported that Anne had made Henry promise not to grant Wolsey an audience, for she knew well how close the relationship was between them, and how quickly the sentimental Henry could fold when faced with his quasi-father figure. Finally, on 9 October, the cardinal was charged with *praemunire,* or infringing on royal authority by exercising his power as papal legate. The dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk took a grim delight in stripping him of the Great Seal and other symbols of the Lord Chancellorship. However, despite his public disgrace, he had not relinquished all hope of regaining the king's favour. He was replaced as Chancellor by Sir Thomas More. More – a strict Catholic, loyal servant of the Pope and scourge of Lutherans (he soon began a campaign of burning heretics) – disapproved of Henry's quest to exchange Katherine for Anne but did not agitate against it.

Wolsey had spent years cultivating European relationships and alliances, but no foreign power came to his aid. His fall had been spectacular and his disgrace now appeared to be complete. The loss of Wolsey marked the first of many relationships that Henry's infatuation with Anne would demolish.

Katherine was understandably alarmed by this approaching parliament, and doubted the transparency of the entire matter. Having been immersed in English politics for so long, she was well informed about the candidates, some of whom Henry had written to personally. In addition, Norfolk and Thomas Boleyn were frantically stacking Parliament with allies – Norfolk especially, for, as the king's chief advisor between the reign of Wolsey and the rise of Thomas Cromwell, he enjoyed considerable parliamentary patronage and influence. Chapuys wrote to Charles,

> As far as I can hear and judge, this King's obstinacy and his passion for the Lady are such that there is no chance of recalling him by gentleness or fair words to a sense of his duty. Things having come to such a pitch, there can be no security or repose [for the queen] unless the case be tried and decided [at Rome], and the sooner the better, for many reasons and political considerations, whereof Your Majesty is the best judge.[36]

Now that the Pope had transferred the divorce case to Rome, he issued an inhibition to stop the legatine court resuming in London, but Henry refused to accept it. Chapuys knew well that the inhibition not only stopped the court's resumption but ordered Henry to appear personally before the Pope in Rome when the case was tried.[37] Chapuys wrote that, deeply insulted at being treated like a naughty child, Henry protested that he could not quit his kingdom, that the order was 'a morsel too big for him to swallow'.[38]

Henry perhaps hoped that if no one formally received the letter inhibition it did not exist, but Katherine, upon hearing of Henry's state of denial from Chapuys, offered to present the document to Henry personally.[39] The Imperial ambassador reported to Charles that Henry's supporters were gathering evidence to corroborate his claim that the brief was a forgery: for example, Henry alleged the wax seal was not where it should be, and the papal secretary's signature was not in the same handwriting as in other documents. 'As I have already informed Your Majesty,' wrote Chapuys,

> they make much here of this brief of dispensation, fancying that if they only succeed in having it condemned as a forgery – which they never will do – they will ultimately gain their point. Hitherto they have adduced no sound proof against its authenticity, and I am really astonished how they can be so quiet about it when the Queen herself has declared by a public act –

> copy of which is here enclosed – that she could not publicly avow or make use of the brief in her defence, inasmuch as it is explicitly said therein that Prince Arthur, her former husband, had consummated matrimony; a claim she declares to be untrue, as her present husband has often confessed before witnesses.[40]

Henry of course was now declining to confirm or deny that he had married a virgin. In fact, perhaps out of desperation, he was now making it clear that Katherine's virginity, or lack thereof, when they married wasn't the point. This must have perplexed Katherine, who understood that her being a virgin on marrying Henry was exactly the point of her defence of her marital status. Katherine finally accused Henry of something many suspected: that Henry's religious 'conscience' was not the ruling factor in his wanting to end the marriage.

Chapuys' despatches in late 1529 make clear that he saw Henry and Katherine as manipulating both the situation and each other. Katherine believed her powerful nephew would be her saviour. She constantly asked Charles to use his influence to gain a result that best suited the Imperial interests and her own. In passing these requests to Charles, Chapuys always made a point of saying they were at Katherine's behest.

Now that we have had a taste of his reports, it would be illuminating to examine some aspects of Chapuys' diplomatic methods. How did this stranger to the English court, who initially lacked any knowledge of the local language, manage to collect the vast amounts of intelligence that fill his despatches?

As we know, early on he relied partly on conversations in French and in Spanish when communicating with Katherine and her Spanish attendants. However, the complaint levelled at Chapuys by various historians – that he could not understand a word of English and therefore his reports should not be taken seriously – is unfounded. Spanish did not come naturally to Chapuys, and yet after four years in Spain he could converse in it fluently, as he did with Katherine and her followers, and effortlessly composed letters in Spanish. While his progress in English was apparently slower, it is incorrect to say he made none. It is true that after four years in England Chapuys claimed he still could not entirely follow a rapid conversation in English.[41] However, he was a shrewd diplomat and, perhaps suspiciously, made much fuss about having trouble with English at court. Was this merely a tactic to lure those around him into holding unguarded conversations in his presence? Long after Chapuys could carry out an English conversation with London merchants who visited him, he still kept Henry and the councillors in ignorance of his fluency.

Chapuys also interacted personally with many of his valuable

sources. From 1529 to 1533, his London residence was almost next door to that of Thomas Cromwell – at this stage a secretary to Cardinal Wolsey – who would emerge, powerful and feared, from the storm that would soon engulf his master. Chapuys and Cromwell both had properties in St Katherine's, now known as St Katherine's Docks, near the Tower. Their proximity to the Thames allowed for quick travel to Henry's various palaces, and the two households often came together when Chapuys and Cromwell dined. The ambassador cultivated relations with foreign merchants, who provided a steady flow of loans on a pro bono basis, as well as vital intelligence, and government officials, who often discussed treaties and foreign commerce while dining.

Other essential sources of intelligence would have been courtiers, his many secretaries and other household staff. A likely source of inside information was Brian Tuke, Henry's secretary, with whom Chapuys formed a firm friendship. As they were almost neighbours, the ambassador and Tuke often dined together and held meetings in Tuke's garden. It could have been dangerous for Tuke, therefore Chapuys was careful to correspond with Tuke through private messengers.

Chapuys was reluctant to appear too often at Henry's court, or to be seen frequently in the company of the powerful Howard faction, the Duke of Norfolk or, later, Thomas Cromwell. So he relied on several of his trusted young aides, whom he encouraged to attend all the functions to which they were invited, to make themselves agreeable and inconspicuous, and above all to keep their eyes and ears open.

The English attributed Chapuys' use of proxies to his gout (which was genuine), a sullen disposition, laziness or a lack of social graces. Chapuys would not hesitate to decline invitations to dine with certain ministers he disliked or distrusted (and did not bother to conceal these feelings), thus saving himself the expense of an extensive wardrobe.[42] Chapuys was not prepared to waste money on what he viewed as sheer frivolities.

Chapuys' carefully chosen household staff were an integral part of his intelligence network.[43] His secretaries included various potential spies, whom he almost certainly used. There was Juan de Montoya, the son of a lady in Katherine's household, who had lived in England all his life and was fluent in English and Spanish. Another man only known as Montessa, the ambassador's right-hand man, actively ingratiated himself in the king's household, and fed Chapuys details of conversations and activities there. Juan Medona, Chapuys' legal assistant, was another of his 'ears'. We also know that Chapuys never travelled without his Flemish servant, who stood silently by him on

most occasions and whose perfect command of English would have shocked Chapuys' unsuspecting hosts.[44]

The breadth and volume of inside information that Chapuys conveyed strongly suggests he made systematic use of hired informers. He is known to have recruited young gentlemen from Flanders and Burgundy, insisting that they speak or undertake to learn English. There was also Nicolas, an Italian that he used in his communications with Cromwell; a Welshman; and possibly two other Englishmen who worked for him. His correspondence also refers to two couriers, Symon and George.[45]

Chapuys' network expanded beyond the English court. Italian bankers enabled him to keep tabs on the movements of English funds abroad; Flemish merchants forwarded his correspondence, and kept him informed of the sale of arms to the English in Antwerp. He also employed a good 'canonist', his nephew Filipe, who would become involved in European politics, corresponding with Mary of Hungary.[46] As we will see in later chapters, Chapuys had at least one pair of eyes in Anne Boleyn's own chambers, who reported to him for over a year, as well as in the king's household; he even turned a French ambassador's secretary into his own spy.

He is understandably guarded in his despatches about the identities and activities of these collaborators, but such methods clearly served him well. He was able to relay to Charles not only vivid descriptions of domestic issues, such as the eventual comings and goings of Henry's queens and mistresses, but, somewhat more importantly, significant military secrets. For example, he reported the Privy Council's estimates of England's naval strength compared with that of France and Spain, and the measures Henry was taking to enhance it. He also discovered which English forts and castles were being strengthened and how,[47] what arms Henry had purchased and which troops would be using them.[48] Chapuys was remarkably well informed as to what other ambassadors were doing, and he knew Henry's plans for an interview with Francis I in Calais before the plans were discussed in the Privy Council.[49] Chapuys was able to report on who was visiting Thomas Boleyn, Cromwell and other members of the court. It is therefore unsurprising that several foreign ambassadors developed an intense personal dislike or even jealousy of the ambassador.[50] As for the King's Great Matter, Chapuys somehow managed to obtain documentary proof of English efforts to corrupt the vote of foreign universities who were canvassed about the issue.[51] Most impressively, he was able to predict each step of Henry's domestic policy accurately, months before those steps were even taken.

Chapuys' intelligence-gathering seems to have been heavily

influenced by one of his predecessors – Rodrigo de Puebla, the Imperial ambassador prior to Mendoza – and he favoured Italian intelligence-gathering techniques. The Spanish ambassadors were notoriously underpaid, and neither Puebla nor Mendoza seems to have considered buying information. Puebla did, however, trade intelligence with the English court, gathering as much as possible from Spanish ambassadors in the Netherlands and Italy, as well as from merchants and colleagues in London. Chapuys improved on this method: he had not only merchants and other ambassadors to feed him information, but the Queen of England herself. Katherine knew intimate details of the court, the royal council and, most importantly, the workings of Henry's mind. Chapuys thus found himself in a unique position as the confidant of the besieged queen.

In his letters, the ambassador Chapuys is cagey about how he managed to fund not only his web of informers but his sizeable entourage. When he later travelled to visit Katherine, who was exiled to Buckden, he was accompanied by a retinue of over seventy men, including numerous musicians and fools; he clearly understood the power of theatrical display.[52] Obviously, despite his frequent complaints to Charles about being out of pocket, Chapuys could readily raise funds if needed; indeed, Charles on numerous occasions invested heavily in his embassies. In 1532, he ordered a draft for 4,000 florins to be paid to his Imperial ambassador in England as back pay, which would have been a great help.[53] Chapuys wrote on several occasions to his mother advising on property deals and giving financial assistance if required, and once offered to expand his niece's dowry by 1,000 crowns.[54] Chapuys, it seemed, had an aptitude for real estate, and was ruthless when it came to buying and selling family properties in Annecy.[55] He was also a shrewd investor, and his previous duties for the Duke of Bourbon and Charles were still earning him handsome revenues. The various benefices granted to him by the Holy Roman Emperor – including a pension on the bishoprics of Osma, Malaga and Toledo in Spain, Cambrai in Flanders and his appointment as Canon of Notre Dame de Liesse in Annecy – also added significantly to his coffers.[56]

There had always been an unspoken agreement that ambassadors received bribes, and Chapuys was likely no different, although he never recorded such transactions. Ambassadors also received presents from their sovereigns and those whose court they resided in.[57]

As correspondence with their masters usually contained sensitive information, ambassadors at court protectively wrote in cipher. Each Imperial embassy had its own cipher, and Chapuys' code book, which was entrusted to a secretary, contained all of them. Garret Mattingly has analysed Chapuys' particular cipher, which was a mixture of signs

for each letter of the alphabet. From here it becomes more complicated. Chapuys' cipher actually had two alternative symbols for each consonant, and three options for a vowel. Added to that were the separate symbols for certain words such as *et* and *que*.[58] When he is directly criticising Henry, Anne or certain members of court, Chapuys launches into cipher. It is a particularly difficult cipher, even by the Imperial embassy's standards, but it is fascinating to see the process.

Returning to those last months of 1529, Katherine's situation had been exacerbated by the weak relations between Henry and Charles, but these improved with the signing of a peace treaty between the two on 28 November 1529, which Chapuys witnessed. It was well received by Charles, something that was not lost on Henry.[59] Katherine was pessimistic about the treaty, as several previous treaties had been signed, and broken, but Chapuys disagreed, believing that Henry was eager to keep this peace. This conviction was not based on any respect for Henry's conscience or principles. The truth was that Henry had already lost over 800,000 ducats in supporting Charles's campaign against France years earlier. It had left the treasury light, and Henry's subjects had strongly demonstrated their dislike of the war with Flanders; a potential popular revolt was not a threat Henry took lightly.[60]

On 1 December 1529, a disabling bill of forty-four articles against Wolsey was presented by the Lord's committee of twelve temporal peers, composed primarily of Wolsey's enemies, including Thomas More, Thomas Boleyn, and the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk.[61] Chapuys correctly believed that the French ambassador, Jean du Bellay, deeply regretted Wolsey's fall because the hopes and expectations of his master, Francis I, had rested on Wolsey's continuance in office. Wolsey had favoured an Anglo–French alliance and, as England still laid claim to much of France, a pro-French lobby in the English court was a political bonus for Francis I. Du Bellay wrote to Anne de Montmorency, Admiral of France, that 'Madamoiselle de Boulen' had made Henry promise never to give Wolsey a fair hearing or trial, as she thought him too dangerous.[62] This confirmed Chapuys' view of Anne's ruthless tactics.

Some at court supposed the cardinal would try to send his valuables abroad, and a strict watch was kept at all the ports. Custom house guards asked to examine Cardinal Campeggio's trunks on his departure for Rome, following the dissolution of the legatine court. When he refused to surrender the keys, they forced open the locks, much to Campeggio's displeasure, but found nothing of Wolsey's.[63] Thus, by the end of 1529, the new Imperial ambassador had witnessed Wolsey's undoing (his complete ruin was soon to come), the consolidation of the Boleyn family's power, the beginning of the end

of Katherine's reign as Queen of England, and the end of the beginning of mistress Anne Boleyn's triumph. It was also clear that, if the Pope did not satisfy Henry, he would find whatever means he could to marry Anne. Chapuys would soon become a major player at court, but certain victors of 1529 would later become victims.

Into the Fray

> *What these people hate most, and what keeps them in constant fear, is to see that I make no efforts whatever to court them, and to gain their friendship.*
>
> Chapuys, 1531

Chapuys has been described as a man of 'hard-headed realism' and 'cynical disillusionment', with 'an impatience with fools and hypocrites, a sympathy with the unorthodox and with the victims of injustice, and a liking for desperate causes'.[1]

The accuracy of this judgement is borne out in his letters, and reactions to – and by – those he dealt with. His relationships with the men of court, especially Henry, show he was indeed impatient when he felt he was being patronised or lied to. Unintentionally, his moments of pique are the bright sparks that light up his detailed, earnest despatches. They are certainly features of his reports about Katherine of Aragon's treatment.

Katherine was no stranger to misfortune. An Anglo–Spanish alliance was secured in 1503 with her betrothal to Arthur, Prince of Wales and heir to the English throne. With his unexpected death, Katherine became a problem of state for England and Spain. She found herself an unwanted piece on the political chessboard while her father, Ferdinand of Aragon, and father-in-law, Henry VII of England, squabbled over missing parts of her dowry. The decision to betroth her to Arthur's brother, Henry, rescued both dowry and alliance, and pleased both sets of parents. The story is well known: to allow their marriage, King Ferdinand sought and was granted a papal dispensation that stated that her first marriage had *perhaps* (Latin: *forsitan*) been consummated – an equivocation that reverberated across England and Europe almost thirty years later.

History remembers Katherine as a daughter of the powerful Spanish throne, a reputedly blue-eyed, red-haired beauty who captured Henry's heart and completely won over her subjects on her arrival in England, but was eventually jilted by her erratic philandering husband. Chapuys portrays her as a vibrant, passionate and, above all, very human queen. Chapuys, an educated commoner, stripped away the mantle of royalty to assess the person.

Defending the besieged Queen of England had always been an important part of his mission. But the sharp-minded lawyer became devoted to Katherine, possibly to an extent beyond what his embassy required, and possibly beyond the point of consistent objectivity and impartiality in his reports – though where objectivity ends and partiality begins is hard to judge.

She was a formidable woman, much like those he corresponded

with: Margaret of Austria and her niece, Mary of Hungary. Margaret, Charles's aunt, was Governor of the Low Countries, and Chapuys reported to her as frequently as to Charles. The ambassador judged many issues of diplomacy in England and across Europe according to how it might advance or injure Katherine's interests, and even went as far as to lecture Charles on the means of advancing her cause. Chapuys would never forgive Henry and Anne for their cruelty towards Katherine and her daughter Mary, and would emerge from this period more cynical and distrustful, with his softer edges hardened.

However, Chapuys was optimistic, almost confident, in his first few months, that Katherine would triumph. He was buoyed by her enormous popularity among the people and the court, and the fundamentally conservative nature of the English. By the end of January 1530, Katherine had been ordered to leave court and reside in Richmond. She continued in letters to her nephew, and through Chapuys' despatches, to urge Charles to ensure that Henry was prevented by papal censures and the pressure of public opinion from having the divorce trial heard in England. Katherine still had faith that Henry's natural goodness would restore him to her[2] but Chapuys did not share Katherine's optimism.

Not only did Henry wish to make his mistress his queen, a bizarre proposal to all of Europe, but he was also determined to hammer the Pope into submission, intent on winning the argument on the merits of his unique interpretation of canon law. Even the domestic living arrangements inspired gossip, with Henry, his wife and his mistress living under the same roof, even if it was a palace. In order to gloss over a situation that might prove improper to visiting foreign dignitaries, Katherine was formally recognised as queen by Henry and invited to court to preside over such events as the Christmas festivities. Chapuys reported that on 9 December 1529, during the feast of St Andrew's, Katherine took advantage of her public position and put on a show, reproaching Henry before all the court for his unkindness and neglect.[3]

Henry's furious response was to boast that the opinions being collected on the case were so weighty that the decision must go in his favour. He petulantly added that, if it did not, he would denounce the Pope as a heretic and marry whom he pleased.[4] Henry then stormed away from his first wife to seek solace from his wife-to-be, only to receive another verbal dressing-down. Chapuys records:

> Lady Anne … said to him reproachfully 'Did I not tell you that whenever you dispute with the Queen she is sure to have the upper hand? I see that some fine morning you will succumb to her reasoning, and that you will cast me off. I have been waiting

long, and might in the meanwhile have contracted some advantageous marriage, out of which I might have had issue, which is the greatest consolation in this world; but alas! Farewell to my time and youth spent to no purpose at all.'

It is one of the most quoted and evocative of Anne's outbursts, and we have the Imperial ambassador to thank for preserving it.[5] Of course he is presumably repeating the words of an eyewitness; we cannot guarantee that it is a verbatim account of Anne's words. Regardless, the ambassador succinctly captured Anne's mood; her insecurities and growing impatience.

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In the first months of 1530, Cardinal Wolsey continued his attempt to claw his way out of the diplomatic trap into which he had walked. When he fell ill in January, the king appeared to be genuinely concerned. He and Anne sent him a message of sympathy, although Chapuys believed that Anne was more intent on finding out whether Wolsey was ill or merely playing on the king's affection.[6] While the Boleyn faction did their best to keep Wolsey and Henry apart, believing it would strengthen their position and hasten a divorce, they had to let Wolsey back into the king's good graces for the moment.

The question arises, were the Boleyns responsible for Wolsey's ultimate downfall? Before his departure, the Imperial ambassador Mendoza had placed the blame on Anne, but Chapuys produced a broader analysis, one which is now widely held:

> The cause of this misunderstanding between the King and the Cardinal can be no other than the utter failure of the measures taken in order to bring about the divorce, on which failure those parties, who for a long time have been watching their opportunity to revenge old injuries, and to appropriate the Cardinal's power, have founded their attacks to undermine his influence with the King, and get the administration of affairs in their own hands.[7]

Chapuys rightly observed that the Boleyn faction was unqualified to resolve the problem of the king's divorce; they needed the cardinal, and Chapuys knew it.

> The King, as I lately informed Your Majesty, leaves [Wolsey] only the revenues of York and a pension of 3,000 angelots, but does not wish him to give up the titles of his other preferments, because in that case he would have to fill them up again, whereas in this manner he will retain the revenues himself during the Cardinal's life.[8]

The revenues of York and his considerable pension meant that Wolsey was now at least as wealthy as the Duke of Norfolk.[9] In February, Wolsey received a signed pardon from Henry for failing to secure the divorce. Chapuys dryly praised the cardinal's knowledge of

how to deal with the court, remarking that Wolsey had 'spared neither promises nor presents to gain his end'.[10]

Wolsey had apparently saved himself. The Boleyn faction hastily played down the news, with Norfolk confiding in the ambassador that he himself had obtained the cardinal's pardon in the hope of controlling just how much favour Wolsey would gain. Chapuys applauded Norfolk's quick move to take credit, but didn't believe a word of it. He knew that if the faction truly had the power to sway Henry in this matter, Wolsey would never have been allowed on the political chessboard.

In fact, Wolsey was for the moment surplus to requirements, as two relative newcomers had offered Henry assistance in achieving a divorce: the cleric Thomas Cranmer, and Thomas Cromwell. The latter was Wolsey's former fix-it man, legal secretary and political advisor as well as a successful moneylender. Both in their early forties, the two men from opposite sides of the Tudor track complemented each other. Cromwell was the son of a Putney tradesman and brewer. His fascinating life (it later interested Chapuys to no end) included several years abroad as a soldier in the French army, and as an accountant and merchant in Italy. After returning to England, he studied law and joined the House of Commons, as well as proving a diligent and effective employee of Wolsey, before marrying a wealthy widow. Cranmer came from minor gentry, was Cambridge-educated, took holy orders and married the daughter of a tavern-keeper who later died in childbirth. These two men would drive Henry's divorce proceedings – and the English Reformation. It was Cranmer who suggested to Henry that the divorce issue was primarily a theological rather than a legal one; therefore, he should canvass the opinions of theological scholars at major universities across Europe on two questions: could a man marry his brother's wife if the first marriage had indeed been consummated? If not, was Pope Julian II's dispensation for the second marriage void?

Cranmer reasoned that Henry could only move forward with a clear conscience if he had a theological ruling as the basis for a divorce, one which would either convince the Pope, or circumvent the Pope's order.[11] Cranmer presented his advice to bishops Foxe and Gardiner, who were assigned once more to travel to Rome, as they had worked well together in previous missions, to ask for a decretal commission (a papal reply to a question of canon law) on the divorce.

Cromwell on the other hand would persuade Henry to adopt a different and revolutionary path: force the English Church and Parliament to acknowledge the king as the supreme religious power in the land, the head of the Church in England, in which Rome held no sway.

Chapuys would have dramatically varied relationships with each member of this crack team.

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On 12 January 1530, Chapuys had his first audience of the year with the king. Also in attendance were Henry's secretary Brian Tuke; Norfolk; and Thomas Boleyn, Earl of Wiltshire; along with the French ambassadors, Jean du Bellay and his brother Guillaume. Interspersed in the perfunctory account are gems of court life. It was a cold and grey day, the ambassadors both found themselves awkwardly waiting outside in the bitter wind before they were led in to the king's antechamber. Immediately, the ambassadors were separated by Norfolk and Thomas Boleyn. Chapuys reported that Norfolk monopolised his attention while Thomas, whose preference for the French was no secret, spoke at length with the French diplomats. The game of guessing which ambassador the king would favour began in earnest when Henry emerged from his apartments. Chapuys reported that he was received graciously, and noted especially that Henry had rather theatrically declared that the Imperial ambassador was most welcome to his court. Henry then reproached Chapuys for not visiting court often enough during the Christmas festivities. Chapuys replied that he had not received an invitation, which he believed was an important part of court protocol. Henry seemed to accept the excuse and said, as Chapuys smugly reported, that 'I was not to play the stranger, but come at all hours on a friendly footing, since at no time, he said, should I be otherwise than most welcome'.[12] This offer Chapuys would later take quite literally.

The subject quickly turned to Henry's new ventures, one being an embassy to Bologna, where Charles and the Pope were residing after their recent reconciliation. This was to be Henry's final attempt to work within the papal conventions, and it is not surprising that Henry chose Thomas Boleyn to head the mission. Thomas was highly intelligent, learned, and an exceptionally skilled diplomat and courtier. Much like Chapuys, he had a certain flair which made him an invaluable negotiator.

Chapuys was not necessarily opposed to the embassy but felt that Thomas's conflict of interest, being the father of Anne, made the prospect of any serious negotiation impossible.[13] He thought even Norfolk would make a better choice; Norfolk was one of the premier men of the realm, ranking above Thomas. He was known to be a staunch Catholic, and was at least a step removed from the issue. There could be few grounds on which the Charles and the Pope would object to meeting him.

Henry knew his choice of Thomas to lead the embassy would irritate the ambassador, and made an awkward, almost apologetic

attempt to defend it. At first, Henry declared that he had thought of sending Norfolk, but he was not in good health, his knowledge of French and Latin was inferior to Thomas's and, although not expressly stated, Thomas Howard lacked the delicate skills required for such challenging diplomacy. Henry confided in Chapuys that he was glad Thomas Boleyn would be leading the embassy, as 'he knew more of the king's secret intentions than anyone else. Not being able to go himself, Boleyn was the fittest man to represent him.'[14]

Chapuys and Thomas had made plans to meet several times before Thomas departed but, when the latter cancelled one particular appointment at Chapuys' lodgings, citing pressing business engagements, and asked Chapuys to call on him instead, Chapuys spurned the request. Apart from the breach of diplomatic protocol, Chapuys suspected Thomas wanted it said that the Imperial ambassador had called on him, giving the impression that all was well between them.[15] Whether it was a deliberate ploy or Thomas had genuinely run out of time, Chapuys assumed subterfuge.

As Chapuys predicted, the mission to Bologna was an embarrassing failure. Charles publicly snubbed the embassy and refused to see Thomas. Most importantly, it failed to pry Charles and the Pope apart. A tired and pessimistic Thomas wrote to Henry, frankly stating that Charles V was totally against his cause, and he bitterly implied that Chapuys was a troublemaker, set to do what he could to wreck Henry's plans.[16]

It was time for plan B. Cranmer was despatched to Rome to do archival research to support the king's suit, and Henry sent Thomas to meet King Francis at Bordeaux. George Boleyn led an embassy to Paris to canvass scholarly opinion on the divorce at the most important university in France, the Sorbonne. George was beginning to emerge from his father's diplomatic shadow. While the French ambassador rather sneeringly derided Henry's choice of George, calling him 'the little Prince',[17] Chapuys on the other hand did not dismiss the young diplomat: if George was anything like his father, he would be formidable indeed. In February, George returned home from his embassy in France. The two men's paths crossed and Chapuys made a point of reporting that George was exceedingly courteous during their conversation. Chapuys also commended the younger man's candour as he intimated that he did not believe the French were inclined to support Henry or be a friend to England.[18]

Throughout February, Henry and his advisors were ensconced with the French ambassadors. Chapuys used every means to discover the details of their discussions, as he suspected that they were negotiating a treaty of major importance. At one point Chapuys had been conversing with the French ambassador, Jehan Jocquin, when

Norfolk, without any greeting, barged into the king's chamber. In his hand he carried a large parchment with a great gold seal of the arms of France hanging from it. Norfolk cut off the gold seal and handed it to the French ambassador, but kept the document.[19] The entire scene was almost a performance carried out in front of the bewildered Imperial ambassador, a piece of theatre which piqued Chapuys' curiosity. It was Guillaume du Bellay, whom Chapuys referred to as Monsieur Langey, who eventually shed light on this event when the two men later met in Chapuys' lodgings. Du Bellay explained that the document was in fact a deed, and the seal was merely removed to replace an earlier deed which 'contained some erasures which, owing to the very strict business habits prevailing here, the King considered might lead to some embarrassment in the future, and therefore another one was put into the hands of the King and the former one, no longer of any use, returned'.[20] Du Bellay reassured the ambassador that the deed, which would be sent to Charles's commissioners, concerned the Treaty of Madrid between Charles V and his then prisoner, Francis I.

Chapuys was not convinced; he was now more certain than ever that the French and Henry were aligning against Charles. Suspicious of these shenanigans, Chapuys writes to Charles to get his take on this event. 'Why was the deed kept and only the seal removed; was it being replaced?' In the same letter he profusely apologises for being so preoccupied with the issue, but lays it squarely at Charles's door, writing that 'Your Majesty, if fully informed, can form a much better idea than I can of these people and their intentions, I have considered it safer to err on the side of prolixity by relating things which may appear superfluous than incur the charge of presumption or negligence'.[21]

Chapuys, ever the lawyer, always felt it necessary to test the parameters of his mission.

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Fortunately for Chapuys, Charles appreciated being given minute details, but he became especially interested in Cardinal Wolsey.[22]

Wolsey and Katherine, who had endured a tug of war for influence over Henry, found themselves on the outside desperately trying to get back in.[23] In Wolsey's mind, when it came to Katherine and Anne, the enemy of his enemy could be useful, if not a friend.

Grown weary of the factions constantly pressuring Henry for his demise, Wolsey turned to the Imperial cause and supported Charles, yet clung to his hope of a return to full power at Henry's side. It was common court gossip that Henry missed Wolsey, as nothing in the government had gone right since he had been sidelined. Chapuys was certain that, should Wolsey be recalled, the leaders of the present

government (the Howards and Suffolk for instance) would pay with their heads. Although the two men never had the opportunity to be properly acquainted, Chapuys believed that only Wolsey was clever enough to find the means to end the divorce proceedings and restore the queen; Wolsey on the other hand knew that his only hope was in Anne's destruction.

In March 1530, Wolsey initiated contact with the Imperial ambassador, a significant event the ambassador immediately reported to Charles. He speculated that Wolsey did not dare leave the proximity of the court again as 'he would then have less facility for watching for his opportunity to return to it, the hope of which he has not yet relinquished'.[24] Using his physician, Agostino Agostini, as a messenger, Wolsey asked the ambassador about the possibility of receiving a Spanish pension on the bishopric of Palencia in Spain.[25] Chapuys was very receptive to the idea, and Wolsey became more vocal and open about an Imperial alliance.[26] However, what use was he to Charles? No longer at court, Wolsey had lost his potency and could report very little to Chapuys, yet he pressed the ambassador, saying that it was time to take stronger measures. The ambassador kept this new relationship simmering in the background but he was hardly going to put all his eggs in Wolsey's basket; he continued to defend Katherine to the king, and to negotiate with the Duke of Norfolk, another person of interest to the Emperor.

If we were to be generous, we might say Norfolk was a man caught between two worlds. He was a loyal subject to the queen, a devout Catholic, pro-Imperialist and distrustful of the French: in short, the perfect political ally for Katherine. Yet his faction was willing to sacrifice the queen they had served, leaving the door open for a French alliance. He was old-fashioned, in danger of being left behind in a fast-moving and forward-thinking world, thus he was someone Chapuys could make use of.

> Monsgr. de Norfolk said to me quite lately, as we were talking together about different things, that just as he himself had been once considered to be in the Imperial interest … I am certain it is that he has always acted loyally towards the Queen. I do not doubt that he will do the same for Your Majesty, and I undertake to keep him in this mood making use of him when required.[27]

Chapuys clearly hoped to keep Norfolk in the Imperial camp. Still, the duke was a figurehead for the Boleyn camp, and Chapuys knew that he could be forced to ignore his Imperialist sympathies at any time.

There is no concrete evidence that Chapuys avoided the Boleyn faction. Chapuys had constant dealings with Thomas and George

Boleyn, he met with Norfolk on a regular basis, and all men were key players in the faction. His dealings with Norfolk in particular demonstrate Chapuys' ability to agree to disagree with certain people, to move beyond the political and religious obstacles standing between himself and other learned people.

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Also mentioned in Chapuys' despatches was Henry's annoying habit of interrupting ambassadors: 'The King frequently interrupts me, especially to contradict and repudiate certain statements, which he said, were not quite correct.'[28] If we are to believe the ambassador – rather than put it down to bias, or perhaps to boasting to impress Charles – Chapuys was more skilled in intellectual sparring than Henry, who tended to bluster and become emotional, speaking before his thoughts could catch up. Chapuys maintained his calm when speaking with the king, often engaging in a game of confounding him: 'Some altercation then followed, when the King, finding he was beaten by reason and honesty on the first point, made his retreat through an argument which I myself had used a little before whilst debating another matter.' When Henry attempted to lecture the legally trained Chapuys on certain points of the law, Chapuys coolly suggested that Henry allow him to speak with the doctors of his council, as he, Chapuys, was in no doubt that he could 'bring them round to my opinion'.[29]

Such exchanges were frequent between the two men, with a frustrated Henry often declaring rather dramatically that it was he who was the injured party, and doggedly insisting that it was clear to everyone that the queen had neither justice nor right on her side. No one had been found to plead her cause (here, he conveniently forgets that Chapuys spent most of his time doing just that), and this was perhaps one of the strongest arguments against her and for Henry.[30] Neither Henry nor Chapuys could resist getting in a parting shot. When Henry complained of Charles taking Katherine's side and forgetting the good relationship England had forged with him, the ambassador replied that, in fact, Charles had more cause to complain of Henry than he had of Charles, as Charles simply would not deviate from the 'path of justice'. When Henry accused Charles of tampering with and corrupting the university scholars being canvassed, Chapuys hotly disputed the claim. It was an insoluble issue, and one that would end only with the removal of either Katherine or Anne. Both men, of course, were eventually to get their wish.

On the canvassing of opinions of university scholars, the only judgements that Chapuys identified as being important were the English universities and the Sorbonne. He supposed that if these universities agreed, Henry would 'consider the justice of his cause

more firmly established than by the opinions of all the rest of the world put together'.[31] The English universities of course obliged Henry – they would hardly have sided with Katherine against the king. The Sorbonne also decided in Henry's favour, probably because Francis I wanted to break relations between Henry and Charles and preferred the strongly pro-French, anti-Imperial Anne Boleyn as Queen of England.

However, Chapuys seriously queried the methods of the English commissioners canvassing the universities in England and France. In a lengthy meeting with the king in April 1530, Chapuys criticised the allegedly violent measures the commissioners were using in some cases to obtain endorsement of Henry's claim. Henry strenuously denied these accusations. Chapuys, always ready with a sharp retort, replied that that he was not at all surprised that false reports reached Henry, since he was equally misinformed as to what took place in his own kingdom.[32] Before Henry could reply, Chapuys launched into a report detailing the alleged incidents, a report which he also copied to Miguel Mai, the Holy Roman Emperor's agent in Rome, in the event that the evidence was needed there.[33] This seemed to panic Henry. In a conciliatory tone, he assured Chapuys that he would state in writing that that no violence whatever had been used; that out of thirty learned men who had been consulted at the principal universities, twenty-nine had agreed with Henry. As to the only dissenting scholar, whom Chapuys reported was in fact the most erudite, Henry dismissed him as very old and somewhat given to intemperance.[34]

The Duke of Norfolk was also present, and within days Henry and Norfolk sent a student, who had recently been in Paris, to assuage any suspicion of misconduct. The student was to assure Chapuys that he and Charles were misinformed about the behaviour and quality of the learned doctors who advocated the divorce at the Sorbonne. Chapuys, however, turned the tables. He urged the young man to speak honestly (although we must wonder how he was so persuasive). Soon the student was criticising the learned doctors' behaviour, 'deprecating those doctors much more than I had done to Norfolk, and strongly commended the doctrine of those who hold for the Queen'.[35]

As the ambassador took his leave from the April meeting with Henry, Norfolk hurried after him, almost pushing the surprised man into his rooms. There, he chided Chapuys vehemently, declaring that if Charles hadn't refused to listen to Henry's reasonable proposals, which would not be repeated, 'it would be in vain for the Emperor to attempt to put any pressure on or assert authority over this King or country, for they would certainly not give way'. Yet in the same breath Norfolk reasserted his wish for an Imperial alliance – a rather fanciful notion in light of how events were proceeding. However, the

duke's next question revealed his real fear: 'Should the King – after thoroughly proving the righteousness of his cause, and obtaining the sanction of the ecclesiastics and of the Anglican Church – marry this woman, what will the Emperor do? Will he make war upon us?'[36]

The ambassador had to diffuse the tense situation. He appealed to Norfolk to continue his support for an alliance between Charles and Henry, asking the duke how Charles could show a friendlier disposition toward Henry, and what he could do to please the king? Norfolk assured Chapuys that, as Charles had such good councillors (perhaps a compliment to Chapuys, or merely flattery), he would not make any suggestions of his own. The duke, however, lacked subtlety. He showed Chapuys a letter (though not the actual contents) from the new French ambassador, Jehan Jocquin (or Giovanni Gioacchino da Passano, as he was usually known), who was to arrive the following day. Chapuys understood this to be Norfolk's warning that Henry he would listen to what the French had to say if Charles would not support him.

Chapuys carefully framed his response to this, flattering the duke by declaring that *he* should have led the embassy to Bologna rather than Thomas Boleyn, as his opinion would have carried more weight with Charles. Norfolk would have seen more clearly the path to justice.[37] Chapuys took quite seriously the warning about the new French ambassador and what inducements he might offer Henry.

The two ambassadors would not meet until Easter Tuesday, and when they did cross paths, the new ambassador said that he had visited court days before in the express hope of meeting him. Chapuys, naturally distrustful of the French, took an immediate dislike to Jocquin, reporting, 'I cannot help thinking that Jehan Jocquin will make all the mischief he can.'[38]

Meanwhile Chapuys maintained contact with the barely functioning Wolsey, who had begged the ambassador to intercede with Charles so that he might be in his favour. Chapuys could make no promises, but hinted that the cardinal must first prove his loyalty. Chapuys proceeded cautiously, telling Charles, 'It can do no harm to tempt him for a while and see how he behaves and what he will say or do, which can easily be done without his enemies getting wind of it.' Chapuys' last words in the despatch not only summarise the cardinal's feelings, but reveal whom Wolsey viewed as one of his most dangerous opponents: 'He is not at all sorry for Mr. de Vulchier's [Chapuys' rendering of Wiltshire, Thomas Boleyn's] failure [in Bologna], but very much so that he is returning home so soon.'[39] The one positive result of Boleyn's mission to Bologna – a change in Katherine's treatment by Henry – was not what the Boleyns had hoped for at all. In April she was permitted to reorganise her household and

choose her own residence.

By June 1530, Wolsey was dangerously urging Charles to raise arms against Henry and to support Katherine's demand that the Pope order Henry to remove Anne from court.[40] However, Henry was also busy: Chapuys reported that 'the representatives of one group (nobles) of the kingdom are to write conjointly to the Pope, explaining the necessity for the King to divorce the Queen and make another marriage, and pointing out also all the evils that would arise if this were not done'. This address to the Pope, the ambassador discovered, ended with a prayer that 'his Holiness, in conformity with the opinion of the most famous universities and most learned men in Christendom, would declare the marriage between the King and Queen illegal, and authorise the King to take another wife'.

Incredibly, this proposal ended with a threat: should the Pope refuse to grant this petition, other means would be found. Chapuys scoffed that Henry assumed that creating a council to decide these matters was what the Pope most feared. Henry was playing with weighted dice; not one of the prelates who favoured Katherine's cause received the summons to join in writing to the Pope.

Chapuys began to experience difficulties, as Henry and his councillors now regarded the Imperial ambassador as a troublemaker and yet another obstacle to the divorce. When Chapuys attempted to meet Brian Tuke, he was told via a messenger that such a meeting was impossible, as the king no longer favoured the ambassador, because 'he discovered that I was the chief leader in the Queen's case, which he said was not, properly speaking, the business of an ambassador, who ought rather to look to measures likely to preserve peace than mix himself up with what might trouble it'.[41]

Tuke's next statement, however, signalled another agenda. He commented that the pension Charles paid him had not been received recently. Chapuys now understood: Tuke would only engage in these potentially dangerous meetings with Chapuys if the pay was good. '[He] thereby intends giving me to understand that it would be doubly, almost inexcusably foolish for him to put himself in danger if he is to reap no benefit from it.'[42] Chapuys had other matters of concern besides a disgruntled double agent.

On 15 June, he penned a rather provocative letter to Charles, urging him to bring things to a crisis by putting pressure on the Pope to demand that Henry send Anne away from court, and to hold Henry in contempt.[43]

He was bolstered by the fact that, despite Henry's desire to be rid of Katherine, he was still in a domestic relationship with her. This lingering affection resulted in an explosive argument over something seemingly unimportant to Henry, yet significant to everyone else.

Henry had sent Katherine cloth to make into his shirts, a quaint arrangement that had endured for over two decades. When Anne discovered the arrangement, Chapuys reported that 'the Lady, hearing of this, sent for the person who had taken the cloth, one of the principal gentlemen of the bedchamber, yelling at the shocked servant, threatening that she would have him punished severely'.[44] An embarrassed Henry quickly confessed that the cloth had been taken to the queen by his order.

Katherine and those close to her might have hoped that this argument signalled a breach between Anne and Henry, but Chapuys disagreed, reporting that they were spending the entire summer together, kingship clearly forgotten. Chapuys remarked that 'the King shows greater favour to the lady every day; very recently travelling from Windsor, he made her ride behind him on a pillion, a most unusual proceeding, and one that has greatly attracted much attention here'.[45] Chapuys does not report that Anne is necessarily unpopular at this stage, merely that these open and unconventional displays of affection were scandalous to the populace. The argument over shirts had, in his mind, moved the couple closer together. Only the Pope would be able to pry them apart.

In late October, news of a papal brief prohibiting Henry's remarriage, and ordering him to dismiss Anne Boleyn from court, reached Henry. Wolsey immediately bore the brunt of Henry's wrath. The French ambassadors had found out that Wolsey had been dealing with foreign powers. In November 1530, William Walsh, a gentleman of the privy chamber, and Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, were sent to arrest the cardinal at Cawood on a charge of high treason. Chapuys immediately distanced himself from Wolsey, and later reported that he had been arrested on the pretext that he 'had written to Rome asking to be reinstated in his ecclesiastical possessions, and to France also for support and credit, and that he was actually beginning to resume his former habits of pomp and splendour and trying to corrupt the people'.[46]

Nothing is said of Wolsey's dealings with Chapuys, nor of any alliance with Charles. Chapuys, however, reported that within days Henry was regretting the loss of his father figure and most trusted advisor. 'I was told by a gentleman that a short time ago the King complained to his council of something which had not been done according to his wish, and that he exclaimed in great anger that the Cardinal was a very different man from any of them for conducting state matters.'[47]

The Boleyns must have taken this as a warning that Wolsey might again regain favour if allowed. Anne approached this potential dilemma by turning the tables on Henry. She confronted him,

weeping, and lamented her lost time and honour, threatening that she must leave him. Alarmed, Henry begged her to stay in a way that, many said, hardly befitted a king.[48]

Anne got her way. Wolsey, currently in the north of England, was ordered to be brought to the Tower of London, but he fell ill on the journey south and died at Leicester Abbey, denying his enemies the pleasure of seeing him imprisoned or executed. On his deathbed he said, 'If I had served God as diligently as I have done the King, he would not have given me over in my grey hairs.'[49]

It is a poignant parting statement from a man who had indeed served Henry with unwavering loyalty and devotion. Chapuys' report of Wolsey's last days is detailed, and ends with an interesting remark. He reports that Wolsey died on St Andrew's Day about 40 miles from London, like a good Christian, protesting, at the time of receiving the Holy Sacrament, that he had never undertaken anything against his master, the king.[50] Whether Henry mourned Wolsey, Chapuys did not speculate, but he did add that Henry would pocket the considerable revenues from Wolsey's estates. Chapuys ended his despatch noting that Wolsey was buried in the same church as Richard III, who had been defeated and killed by Henry's father. 'Both lie buried in the same church, which the people begin already to call "the Tyrants' grave."'[51] While the remains of Richard III have now been recovered, the body of Wolsey, once one of the most powerful of men, second only to the king, remains lost.

There was one loose end that could have caused Chapuys trouble: Wolsey's physician, Agostino Agostini, who had carried letters between the two men. Henry's councillors suspected a relationship between Wolsey and Chapuys, as the physician was directly interrogated about it. Fortunately for Chapuys, the physician staunchly denied knowing the ambassador or having had any acquaintance with him. Chapuys was confident of the denial, as Norfolk, who found it hard to conceal any secret, would surely have advised the ambassador had Agostini confessed. Chapuys may have stretched the truth somewhat when he declared with confidence to Charles that 'if the physician should relate what passed between him and myself, he could say nothing which could lay me open to accusation'.[52]

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Throughout 1530, Chapuys was in frequent contact with Norfolk, but had not seen Thomas Boleyn since his return from Italy. When Chapuys was visiting Norfolk in late October, he ran into Thomas and immediately sensed a palpable shift in their relationship. Clearly Thomas was still smarting from the disaster of his embassy to Bologna. Although Boleyn was usually in control of his emotions, he now

vented his frustration to the surprised ambassador at Charles's obvious control of the Pope.[53] Thomas vehemently slandered the Pope and all the cardinals, to the extent that Chapuys' only thought was to remove himself from the situation.[54] Thomas also intimated that he thought Chapuys himself was partially to blame for the treatment of Thomas and his embassy to Bologna. However, as Chapuys had pointed out, Charles hardly needed encouragement to distrust the father of Henry's mistress. Chapuys duly reported the incident to Charles, concerned that, should Thomas and his daughter remain influential at court, they would alienate the kingdom from the Pope.[55] It is important to note that Chapuys clearly saw Thomas as a driving force in the family.

The two men would clash again in November, this time over a proposal in which Boleyn was involved, to reform the Church. These incidents were the genesis of Chapuys' conviction that Thomas and Anne were Lutherans – although Chapuys tended to believe that anyone whose faith wasn't completely orthodox was Lutheran.

Chapuys had even more cause for concern now that Wolsey, a potential ally, was gone. Katherine would now face adversity even from those sent to defend her. William Warham, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was an ineffectual participant in the divorce crisis. He was appointed one of Katherine's counsel, but never instigated any action on her behalf and was in fact detrimental to her cause. Warham lacked fortitude, once admitting to an unimpressed Katherine, who was not afraid to defy Henry, 'ira principis mors est' ('the anger of the prince is death').[56] Katherine discovered that Warham had drawn up two documents, one of which, Chapuys correctly suspected, was a protest to the Pope that as Archbishop of Canterbury and legate of England, he, Warham, should conduct the divorce case.[57]

Chapuys knew that with Warham presiding, the hearing would be no more neutral than if Henry himself led it. Warham was a constant source of disappointment to Chapuys, who described him as by nature timid, unreliable in his old age and incapable of making any useful decisions.

The Imperial ambassador's temper was slowly fraying. Charles's focus was elsewhere, the Pope was ineffectual and now the man chosen to defend Katherine, Warham, had betrayed her. In an unusual outburst, he vented his frustrations to Nicholas Perrenot de Granvelle, who still held the position of Charles's secretary, and to Charles about the Pope. He complained that Clement had been dilatory and equivocal in the entire divorce business, and correctly asserted that Henry did not care at this stage what the Pope thought – it had gone too far for that.

Chapuys suspected that a vote would be held in the Reformation Parliament to exempt England from papal rule. If this happened,

Chapuys would lay the blame solely at the Pope's feet. The veiled accusation to Charles was more or less 'and you haven't lifted a finger either'.

However, Henry was far more astute. He saw Warham as his way out of the divorce mess, and instructed his agents in Rome to insist that the proceedings be transferred to Warham's jurisdiction of Canterbury. Pessimistic though Chapuys may have been, he nevertheless made an effort to prevent any decision being reached. He insisted that the papal nuncio in England visit Warham in the hope of convincing him not to meddle. However, Warham would not defy Henry.

Chapuys saw that Katherine needed support from Rome and, in a desperate attempt to salvage Katherine's position, he wrote to Charles insisting that Clement should threaten to excommunicate Henry:

> Your Majesty could easily make effective war upon the English, for they would by this measure be judicially deprived of all commercial intercourse with Flanders and Spain, by which means the country would greatly suffer, and the people's disaffection to the King and Council be greatly increased.[58]

The ambassador must have had grandiose visions of Charles crossing the sea with a vast army to depose Henry and save Katherine. Charles entertained no such thoughts.

Charles's inaction clearly made Chapuys feel powerless to save Katherine, and he reconsidered leaving England. Katherine, much more a realist, shook him out of his stupor and begged him to dismiss all thoughts of leaving the country. She said she had more need of his services than ever. Chapuys assured her that he would stay for her sake, although he conceded that he could do little, especially when Charles refused to make any move. There was one small glimmer of hope, however: Katherine had another champion.

Bishop John Fisher did not fear Henry when it came to issues on the Church and the divorce, and he was fast becoming a thorn in the Boleyns' sides. Fisher had supported Katherine prior to Chapuys' arrival in England, and refused to support the king's case against her in the legatine court in 1529. However, by 1530, so prolific was he when it came to writing in her defence that he admitted he could not remember how many treatises had come from his pen.[59] He was certainly a formidable adversary as well as an intellectual and politically skilled theologian. In January, in accordance with Cromwell's suggestion, the bishops and other clergy in convocation were threatened with a writ of *praemunire* – usurping the king's authority, specifically, supporting Wolsey's infringement of royal authority by exercising his power as papal legate. To avoid suffering Wolsey's fate, when he had been charged with *praemunire*, the clergy

secured a royal pardon by paying the Crown a substantial sum of money. Crucially, they also acknowledged Henry as Supreme Head of the Church and Clergy in England. Fisher then insisted on adding a clause to Henry's new title that almost rendered it ineffective: 'as far as the law of Christ allows'.[60]

Chapuys and Fisher began to communicate secretly in the early months of 1531.[61] Chapuys told Charles that Fisher had entreated the Emperor to take action, which Fisher assured Chapuys would be as pleasing to God as war upon the Turk.[62]

If we are to believe Chapuys, Fisher's voice was but one of many who were prepared to take action against the king. Warham and Bishop Fox had summoned Fisher to Warham's house in order to rebuke him and implore him to retract what he had written in Katherine's favour. Fisher was no pushover; he calmly replied that, as the Pope was the sole judge, it could only be properly argued before him.[63] Fisher, it seemed, could not be swayed or threatened; he would have to be dealt with differently.

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Even in death, it seemed the court, or more specifically the Boleyn faction, could not let Wolsey go. Chapuys was made aware of a distasteful episode in January 1531 in which Thomas Boleyn invited Claude de la Guysch, who took charge of the French embassy after Jocquin's departure, to dinner. The main event was not the meal, for 'he caused a farce to be acted of the Cardinal [Wolsey] going down to Hell'.

The reaction was not what Thomas Boleyn had anticipated. La Guysch was horrified and deeply offended, and immediately blamed Thomas, as well as Norfolk, for even having the 'farce' printed.[64] Chapuys, who had been in communication with la Guysch, wrote to Empress Isabella that the Boleyns had been attempting to win la Guysch over in earnest, entertaining, wining and dining him. However, Chapuys had been told that the Frenchman was quite vocal about his disdain for the Boleyns, saying openly what he thought of them and laughing at their eccentricities in matters of government and administration.[65] He would not be the last Frenchman to snub the family.

Anne adopted as her motto 'Ainsi sera groigne qui groigne'[66] – 'That's how it will be, let those who grumble, grumble.' The motto was immediately derided and became the subject of jokes across the country, but Chapuys refrained from comment. The motto was not original but was borrowed from the Archduchess Margaret of Austria, though Anne omitted the final line, a pro-Imperialist cheer: 'Vivant Burgundy!' Chapuys would certainly have been aware of Anne's time in Mechelen with the Imperialist Margaret. Regardless of her

upbringing and past connections, Anne would not want to associate herself with the Imperial throne, as in England the complete motto of the archduchess would be associated with Charles, and therefore Katherine.

It is possible she suspected Chapuys was keeping Katherine well informed of the divorce proceedings, so she indulged in a spot of counter-espionage by banning Katherine's regular gentlemen courtiers from attending her. A few months later, Chapuys was the target of a peculiar deception, apparently for Anne's benefit. Henry summoned him to speak privately, and manoeuvred the perplexed ambassador to a small window in a gallery. As he interrogated Chapuys somewhat aggressively about Katherine and the divorce, Chapuys noticed Anne spying on them from above. He wrote that 'the lady was at a little window in the King's chamber that looked onto the gallery where we were, from where she could see and listen to us'.[67] The fact that Henry went to such lengths to pacify his mistress clearly flabbergasted Chapuys.

Chapuys carried out the routine negotiations entrusted to him, but he was clearly burdened by such a sense of injustice, when it came to Katherine and Mary's cause, that he seized every opportunity to improve their positions and assert their rights. He had come to regard his function as the defender of Katherine and Mary, and was convinced of the merits of overthrowing Henry's government.

On 8 January 1531, Chapuys informed the king of the funeral of Margaret of Austria, who had died in December, and asked Henry whom he wished to appoint to represent him at the ceremony.

Chapuys was devastated by Margaret's death; he had always admired her and followed her guidance. He was escorted in an emotional state to see the king, who had been dining. We can infer a degree of indignant surprise from Chapuys, who had anticipated a graver Henry than the merry monarch before him. Henry seemed less interested in the details of the funeral than in who was likely to succeed Margaret in the government of the Low Countries. Chapuys was evasive, replying only that Charles would make a suitable appointment. The answer seemed not to be to Henry's taste, and he met Chapuys' answer with silence, before moving on.

Chapuys visited the queen later that evening to reassure her that he had not spoken to Henry of her affairs. A pattern was emerging between Katherine and her ambassador: he was her sounding board and life coach, frequently rallying her spirits, which often turned to melancholy. He was, in a sense, her window to the outside world, and she was utterly dependent on him. He reported that he often left her in a better state of mind, and more determined than ever to resist Henry.[68] Yet it worked both ways: when Chapuys seemed to despair of

the situation, Katherine rallied him, her proud royal heritage seeming to emerge as she dragged Chapuys back from the brink of despair. They made a fine pair.

An increase of French representation at court always made Chapuys uneasy. 'Never were the ambassadors of France for a long time past in such close correspondence with these people as they are at present, for since the second day of [Noel] scarcely one or two have passed without their being present at court, and always, as they say, transacting business of some kind.'[69]

Chapuys' fears increased when he realised that the French ambassadors were now being given primacy by Henry at court, often snubbing Chapuys and the other ambassadors. Chapuys' suspicions were confirmed when he heard that the king was about to give Jehan Jocquin, the French ambassador, one of the bishoprics formerly held by Cardinal Wolsey. Chapuys understood that Jocquin was being sent to Rome to resurrect the earlier marriage negotiations between the Pope's niece and one of the sons of the King of France. Chapuys also reported that a marriage between the Duke Alessandro de' Medici and the Princess Mary had been proposed, although he thought this was only meant to reassure the Pope. His real fear now was that Jocquin's true purpose was to obstruct the General Council in Rome from considering the divorce.

Meanwhile, Henry's relationship with Anne was under constant speculation as it seemed the divorce issue would never reach a conclusion. Charles feared that Henry's growing frustration might drive him to marry Anne regardless of Rome's decision. Chapuys assured him Henry would not proceed with a *de facto* marriage. Henry's council were becoming increasingly uncomfortable with the situation, and Chapuys was confident that Henry would read the mood of his council and 'not dare to proceed'.[70] In this instance, Katherine knew her husband's character better, and was even surprised and bewildered by Chapuys' incredulity when it came to Henry's private fancies.

Meanwhile Katherine's proctor, Dr Pedro Ortiz, who was almost as dedicated to Katherine as Chapuys himself, was ordered by Norfolk to remove himself from court and await the king's pleasure. Ortiz was bewildered and angered by the order; he and Chapuys knew the intention was to keep Ortiz, who would have tried to obstruct proceedings, out of the way for the next sessions of Parliament.

On January 11, Chapuys reported that Henry had received letters from Rome which greatly angered him and Anne. In December 1530, the Pope had requested that Henry dismiss Anne from court. Now he had followed this up by threatening Henry with excommunication if he entered a second marriage before the existing one was decided,

though Anne was not mentioned by name. As usual, Norfolk was tasked with fetching Chapuys and explaining the situation.

Norfolk was particularly melodramatic; Chapuys reports in his humble letter to Charles:

> Sire,
>
> It is so very humbly that I beg to commend myself to the good grace of Your Very Holy Majesty.
>
> Sire,
>
> The duke of Norfolk sent for me asking me to come today at 9 o'clock in the morning to the church of the Jacobins, where he wanted to speak to me.[71]

Along with Stephen Gardiner, Norfolk took Chapuys into a secret chapel for the meeting, where he told Chapuys that the Pope had taken this action merely to please the queen. Chapuys made a point of reporting that Norfolk's words were a warning to him, 'not only as ambassador of Your Majesty but also as his friend'.

The papacy in the past, Norfolk concluded, had often tried to usurp authority from the kings of England. Although a devout Catholic, Norfolk informed Chapuys that kings were above popes; Henry was absolute master in his own kingdom and acknowledged no superior.[72] This was to be the common refrain around the court.

Chapuys calmly thanked the duke for sharing his thoughts, rather than being provoked by Norfolk's comments regarding papal authority. Norfolk was after all a man Chapuys wished to keep on side. As if to remind Norfolk that Henry's realm was utterly dwarfed by that of Charles, Chapuys pointed out that Charles ruled a number of kingdoms and had an even greater need of many male children than any other crowned prince.[73]

Chapuys continued, scoring another point: if the tables were turned, and Charles found himself with no male heir, he would immediately resist any ambition to remarry if Henry asked him to. Especially, the ambassador added pointedly, if Charles was blessed with a daughter like Mary. Chapuys had neatly used Norfolk's past praise of Mary against the duke, forcing him to either insult the princess or agree with Chapuys' point. The ambassador added that Norfolk had in the past told Chapuys that the true and legitimate right of Henry's throne proceeded from the female line, that is to say, from Henry's mother and Mary's grandmother, Elizabeth of York. Surely she was a perfect example for Mary to follow and Mary was, as Norfolk had stated, a noble, virtuous and accomplished princess.[74] The ambassador's sly remarks were a lesson for Henry's councillors to choose their words carefully in conversation with Chapuys; he could file them away to use as weapons when needed.

The duke had no comeback, but coolly replied that the king would

still marry if he could. Chapuys prided himself on being pithy, but the proceeding conversation is perhaps one of the most convoluted and confused that Norfolk and Chapuys would endure with each other, and is certainly a test of an historian's patience.

The points made by both men make more sense contextually if we take into account Henry and Charles's differing ideals. Norfolk remarked to the ambassador that he had lately shown the ambassadors of France the seal on the tomb of King Arthur. Chapuys, in his report to Charles, admitted that he had no idea who this Arthur was. Norfolk then showed Chapuys a copy of a label found on the tomb, which read, '*Patricius Arcturus*, *Britanniæ*, *Galliæ*, *Germaniæ*, *Daciæ Imperator*' ('King Arthur, Emperor of Britain, France and Belgium, Germany and Romania').

Thus, Norfolk was defending Henry's right of empire, though solely an English empire. Chapuys, clearly not impressed, simply asked if Arthur was also Emperor of Asia.[75] He also asked Norfolk to consider what had become of the ancient empires of Assyrians, Macedonians and Persians if Henry was considering conquests like this mystical King Arthur. The ambassador was not to be bested when it came to historical comparisons, especially by Norfolk.

> In the end I told him I thought the King would do well to allow execution of papal mandates to be intimated to him, and two or three persons whom the matter concerned, after the example of Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, who would not expel from his house one who continually reviled him, because he preferred that he continue to revile him and state his case, rather than go publishing it throughout the world.

Chapuys appears to be on the defensive, clearly misinterpreting Norfolk's words as a declaration that Henry had ambitions to rival Charles. However, Chapuys, it must be remembered, served a European ruler who engaged almost constantly in territorial conquest, and his mentality was naturally geared towards conquest. Norfolk had forgotten who his audience was.[76]

Chapuys had made his thoughts about the divorce perfectly clear, and was exasperated that Henry was still trying to convince the Pope and the rest of Europe that he was acting according to his conscience. The Spanish ambassador to Rome, Juan Antonio Muxetula, reported that the Pope had heard from his ambassadors in France that Henry was 'so passionately in love with the woman whom he wishes to marry that, having some difference with her, he summoned certain of her relations [presumably Thomas and George] and implored them with tears to make peace.'[77] The French ambassadors did not know what to make of Henry's actions; Muxetula believed that Henry had lost all dignity, acting against his honour and conscience.

When Muxetula reported that Henry had actually printed a bull which stated that he was acting on grounds of conscience, the Pope apparently threw back his head and laughed at 'this new madness'. Muxetula mischievously added that it would have been better for Henry to 'publish an excuse that he had been crying very much in consequence of the quarrel he had had with his mistress; and that the theologians advised him to cry for the discharge of his conscience'.[78]

Thus Chapuys was not the only European ambassador to think Henry's actions were becoming more and more ridiculous.

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Chapuys reported that Henry was shaken by the Pope's threat of excommunication if he ignored Rome and married again. The gentlemen of his chamber had confided in Chapuys that the king had many sleepless nights, which, Chapuys rather artfully added in his despatch, was hardly surprising if his mistress continued to berate him. Chapuys had the sense that Henry was avoiding him, especially when several requests for an audience were denied. His suspicions proved correct: Henry was by all accounts avoiding seeing either the Imperial ambassador or the papal nuncio, for fear of being handed an actual papal brief of excommunication.[79] Chapuys cheerfully undertook the responsibility of circulating the brief himself.[80]

The ambassador would once more be frustrated by Pope Clement's hesitant actions; by late February 1531, it was clear to Chapuys that the papal brief was in fact quite feeble in its execution, as the Pope 'was afraid he had not the power to do as right and justice required and had little confidence in his own power'. Katherine and the ambassador vented their frustrations; Henry and his councillors caught their breath, and Anne got a second wind.[81]

Yet the true toll of Henry's affair was evident in the number of friends it had cost him, a list which continued to grow. Chapuys lamented that, if only the Pope had simply ordered Anne to leave court, Henry would never have claimed sovereignty over the Church. Chapuys also reported that Thomas Boleyn had told Bishop Fisher that he could prove by the authority of scripture that Christ had left no successor nor vicar. Just how Thomas proposed to prove this remains a mystery. Lord Chancellor Thomas More, who had caught wind of the conversation, was so mortified that he considered resigning from office.

In early February, Bishop Fisher hosted several friends for dinner, including Thomas More. The first course was a soup, which all the guests were served, save More who declined. Within hours, all who had tasted the soup (including almost all the household servants) were dangerously ill. Two of Fisher's guests died, as well as several beggars, to whom the soup (*potage*) had been distributed for charity. Chapuys

wrote,

> Luckily the worthy Bishop, whom God no doubt considers very useful and necessary in this world, did not taste of the drug [*drogues*] and thus escaped. They say that the cook, having been immediately arrested on the application of the Bishop's brother, confessed at once that he had actually put into the broth some powders, which he had been given to understand would only make his fellow servants very sick without endangering their lives or doing them any harm. I have not yet been able to ascertain who it was who gave the cook such advice, nor for what purpose.[82]

The cook was punished by being hung in chains and dipped, inch by inch, in a cauldron of boiling oil.

Chapuys reported that Henry had shown his displeasure at the incident, but pointed out, with good reason, that regardless of the 'demonstrations of sorrow he makes he will not be able to avert suspicion' from falling on himself, Anne, or her father, as they had the most cause to eliminate Fisher. Chapuys does not, however, blame Anne. Nicholas Sander, a Catholic priest writing years later about Anne, accused her of the deed, but Chapuys merely pointed out logically that it would be hard for her to avoid any suspicion.[83]

By this time, Chapuys was emerging as an unofficial leader of what could be called the 'Aragonese faction'. He had passed letters between the Emperor and Katherine, had begun communications with men such as Fisher who were openly opposed to Henry on certain matters, and continued to visit the queen, to Henry's annoyance. Henry saw in Chapuys a certain tenacity for troublemaking.[84] While the French were being wined and dined publicly by the Boleyns, Chapuys was ruefully aware that he was not as welcome as they.[85] No council members would be seen in his company, which Nicholas Carew, a Boleyn cousin and loyal courtier to Katherine, confirmed, and Norfolk became cold and distant.[86] Katherine's cause was draining the ambassador's energy and making his position in England tenuous to the point of dangerous. It was an impossible situation; the queen depended on him more than anyone else, and he now felt he was in too deep to distance himself from her cause, even if he had wanted to. However, in helping her, his opportunities to properly carry out his embassy and report to Charles became harder as councillors closed ranks. Yet Chapuys had little choice, as his master's wishes were to provide Katherine and her supporters with legal assistance and advice. Thus he served two roles: Chapuys the lawyer, and Chapuys the diplomat. Despite the open hostility towards him at court, Chapuys made use of his spies and allies, never yielding his position or suggesting that there was any room for negotiation when it came to Katherine's interests.[87]

By May 1531, the king, queen and mistress were still under one roof for all religious occasions. It seems Henry's mood swung from day to day, depending on whom he spent his time with. During dinner on 10 May, Katherine mentioned to Henry that the Princess Mary had been ill. Henry showed deep concern, and for a brief moment, to Katherine at least, it was as if Anne had never been. She and her husband discussed their only child's health, and what possible remedies could be applied. Emboldened by his behaviour, Katherine asked him the next morning if Mary would be allowed to visit. Henry's reaction was a far cry from the previous evening: Chapuys reports that 'he could not consent to [Mary's] coming [to Greenwich], upon which the Queen prudently and graciously replied that neither for the sake of her own daughter, nor for any other person in the world would she consent to anything that would look like a separation from her husband'.[88] One wonders if it was Chapuys himself who had forewarned her of Henry's change of mood.

Political fortunes had changed by late May, and Chapuys was back in favour. The Imperial and the French ambassadors put on an unusually united front, approaching the Privy Council together to protest the taxes that London merchants had tried to impose on foreign merchants. A suitable conclusion was reached, but Chapuys was aware of the palpable change in behaviour towards him. Members of the Privy Council were even more courteous and polite than they had been when Chapuys first arrived in the country. Norfolk, in Chapuys' bewildered words, 'made me so many caresses yesterday that I do not know what to think of it'.[89]

Norfolk reported to Chapuys that a courtier had spread a disparaging report about Charles in the presence of the king. However, Henry, Norfolk assured Chapuys, had suddenly interrupted him and declared the slander was untrue. Not satisfied that Chapuys had grasped the implication that Henry was deeply concerned for Charles's interests and reputation, Norfolk repeated the story to the bemused ambassador four times, before calling out Thomas Boleyn to confirm the report.[90]

The French ambassador, however, was now in the same position as Chapuys only weeks prior, as he had obtained the release of a coin shaver, as well as certain 'pirates'. The English now openly mocked him, while Norfolk attacked him.[91]

These months show how fragile the relationships were between the ambassadors and Henry, and how a simple act by Henry could mean an ambassador was able to do his duty, or find himself locked out.

The papal nuncio, on Chapuys' advice, had an audience with Henry in late May. Matters had not progressed, despite attempts by King Francis to force the Pope to end the papal investigation into

Henry's matter. Henry, predictably, was fuming. He attacked the Pope to the nuncio, declaring that ever since Charles had held Clement hostage he had been afraid of the Emperor and dared not act against his wishes.[92] Henry then rallied, and advised the nuncio that he would send him a newly printed book 'on condition that he will not shew it to any living soul for some time to come. In this manner will I try to make him lean to the side of justice.'[93] Chapuys had somehow already obtained a copy of this book, and had sent it directly to de Granvelle to look over. He then sent it to his counterpart in Rome, Miguel Mai, and to Dr Ortiz, so that they could be prepared for any impending political onslaught. The arguments in this book, scoffed Chapuys, could be easily refuted.

Henry now turned his attention to Katherine. He sent a delegation, in an attempt to force her to agree to have the case heard in England. Chapuys had caught wind of the plan and warned the queen, but neither of them expected the delegation to be quite so desperate. The group, led by Norfolk and Suffolk, included the Marquis of Dorset, the Earl of Talbot, the Earl of Northumberland, Thomas Boleyn and several other noblemen, as well as the bishops of Lincoln and London, and doctors Lee, Sampson and Gardiner.[94]

It was a political assault, engineered for nine in the evening when Katherine was almost in bed, and more vulnerable. Norfolk explained that they were there in the name of the king, and without further ado proceeded to list the ways in which Henry was hurt and displeased by her actions. The duke begged her to consider how many dangers they and the whole of England would risk by her refusing to comply with the king's wishes. Surely, he insisted, Katherine had no legitimate cause of complaint and had always been treated as well and as honourably as any Queen of England.

Katherine remained impassively polite, says Chapuys. He wrote that she assured the men that 'no living soul regretted more than she did the annoyance the King had experienced, nor the contempt and humiliation whereof he complained, especially if, as the King said, she was the principal cause of it'.[95]

Katherine also respectfully acknowledged Henry's fair treatment of her and declared that she was thankful for the assistance given to her father (Ferdinand) in the conquest of Navarre some years earlier. Norfolk had berated her in Henry's name, stating that the king had greatly assisted her father and had never been thanked or rewarded, Katherine coolly replied that, if Ferdinand had no time fully to acknowledge and requite the service, it was entirely owing to his most sudden death.

To every point, Chapuys reports, Katherine had a reasonable argument. She acknowledged the king as her chief and sovereign, and

as such was ready to serve and obey him. In this diplomatic tag team, Chapuys reported, Norfolk bowed out and Dr Lee entered the ring.

> She ought to be convinced that having been carnally known by prince Artus [Arthur], her first husband, her second marriage with the King, his brother, was a most detestable and abominable act in the eyes of God and of the World. That was a fact acknowledged, as he found, by all good English doctors, and confirmed by the universities.[96]

Katherine quickly shut him down, stating,

> You had better address your allegations to others; you shall never persuade me that what you say is the truth. In this present case you are neither my counsel nor my judge, and I can very well see that what you have just said is more for the sake of flattering the King than of adhering to truth.

Katherine again declared that she had been a virgin when she married Henry, and added that quite frankly this was not the time of night or place to be having a conversation about her maidenhead. Dr Sampson was then tapped to enter the ring, and argued that Katherine was in fact to blame for the divorce dragging on, as she refused to have the cause tried and sentenced elsewhere than in Rome.

Katherine's resolution was only strengthened by these attempts to intimidate her. With perfect equanimity, she replied that if Dr Sampson had experienced even half of the hard days and nights she had passed since she had first learned the legality of her marriage – her first marriage and even her virginity had been dredged up before all of Europe – he would understand her need to have a decision pronounced by the highest authority: the Pope.

So far Henry's henchmen had kept the tone of the conversation civil, but it was John Longland, Bishop of Lincoln, who, in Chapuys' opinion, came close to overstepping the mark. He accused Katherine of living in concubinage ever since she lied about her virginity, but it was his last words, spoken with absolute spite, that deeply offended Chapuys. Longland told Katherine, in front of the group of men, that 'God had fully manifested his abomination of such a union by sending down the malediction of sterility with which she had been visited'. Katherine could have broken down at this moment, before thirty strangers who had come to her residence uninvited at night, in the face of an accusation that the burden of her dead children lay solely at her feet. However, she remained utterly composed, answering simply that

> although she esteemed and loved the King as much as woman can esteem and love man, even should he be one hundred thousand times greater in quality and perfection, she would never have remained in his company one single moment against the

voice of her conscience. She knew perfectly well that she was his legitimate and true wife, and that the proofs to which they alluded, if any existed to the contrary, were forged and false.

Katherine was finished with the farce. She looked around the room and declared that she was astonished to see so many high personages of such great power and influence in the world gathered round her.

She cynically declared that she could not guess why such a large delegation was required to surprise her at such an hour, 'without friends or counsel'.[97] Norfolk, having recovered from his last round, spoke up that she was hardly friendless. Warham, the Archbishop of Canterbury; the bishops of Durham; Rochester and others were on her side (though Chapuys was not mentioned by name).

She sharply interrupted Norfolk, deriding his statement.

> Pretty counsellors those are, for if I ask Canterbury's advice he answers me that he will have nothing to do with such affairs, and keeps repeating to me the words *ira principis mors est*. The bishop of Durham answers that he dares not, because he is the King's subject and vassal. Rochester tells me to have good heart and hope for the best. All the others have made similar answers, so that I have been obliged to send to Flanders for lawyers, as no one here would or dared draw an appeal in my favour.[98]

Katherine had every right, in her opinion, to ask that the case be tried in Rome.

The main participants of the delegation had said their piece, except for Thomas Boleyn, who had the most cause to attack Katherine, and who had hitherto remained silent. Thomas was altogether more refined, and when he did finally address Katherine it was without malice or disrespect. He quietly and politely stated that the permission to appeal, to which the queen alluded, did not go so far as to have the king summoned to appear personally at Rome. Katherine reasonably replied that she had never solicited or sought Rome's summons of Henry, and that if her appeal required such a step, she could not be made responsible for it.[99]

This extraordinary and volatile meeting could have continued into the night, but finally the men left, without having gained a single point. In Chapuys' account, Katherine is sharp, witty and composed, with an enduring strength that withstood the bombardment by thirty of Henry's best. Whether or not events played out exactly as Chapuys described cannot be verified. However, her formidable behaviour tallies with many accounts of Katherine by Chapuys and other sources, as well as letters written by Katherine herself. She was by now quite used to being accosted by Henry's councillors – and they were no longer strangers to being bested by her.

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The focus of the divorce was once more the issue of Katherine's virginity when she married Henry. Charles sent the ambassador several documents that spoke of witnesses to Katherine's first marriage. Katherine had told Chapuys that there might be a witness in Flanders willing to give testimony that the marriage to Arthur had not been consummated. However, Chapuys was relying on the testimony of Dr Scoriaza and Esquire Bregilles, who had been in Arthur's retinue and could testify for Katherine.[100] Chapuys fell desperately on these as possibly resolving the issue, and suggested that Katherine could, through bribes or appeals, have someone go to Flanders to procure a testimony. However, no one was willing to incur Henry's wrath. Katherine insisted the witnesses would have to come from Spain: Katherine's former ladies and servants, who had come to England with her and since had departed.[101] De Puebla, the ambassador prior to Mendoza, had left several documents regarding these witnesses with Katherine, but upon viewing them Chapuys the lawyer lamented that they contained nothing of use.[102] While Chapuys was still occupied with the divorce, it seemed Henry was trying to forget it altogether. The ambassador was engaged for several weeks in a tedious game of trying to procure an audience with Henry, but the king was constantly on the move at the height of summer and would not stay in one residence long enough.[103] Chapuys chased Henry from Hampton Court to Windsor, and complained that Henry and Anne were so engaged in hunting and feasting that it appeared no business of the realm had actually been conducted.

Finding Henry elusive, Chapuys agreed to the Duke of Norfolk's request that Chapuys discuss business with him instead.[104] The duke's barge, an impressive feature on the Thames, escorted the ambassador to Hampton Court, where Norfolk received Chapuys graciously enough. But he declared that Charles had done great injustice to the king by having him summoned to appear personally at Rome, a 'most outrageous and unprecedented act'.[105]

In yet another example of Norfolk not considering his words carefully, he stated that it would have been better had Henry and Katherine never married at all. Realising his gaffe, he hastily added that of course the union had produced Mary, 'a pearl' and 'one of the most beautiful and virtuous women in the world'.[106] After what Norfolk no doubt considered to be a good save, he informed Chapuys that Henry had visited Mary twice a day, which he was sure would please the ambassador. The mood seems to have been spoiled, however, when Norfolk yet again tried to insist that the divorce case be tried in England. Chapuys sarcastically declared his amazement that Norfolk was, all of a sudden, a great a doctor-at-law, like Chapuys himself, and had evidently been reading much on the subject.[107] The

ambassador by now no doubt regretted stepping on to the duke's barge.

After Henry returned to London, the ambassador reported that the king had sent a courier to Rome with despatches. The ambassador endeavoured to discover their contents, deducing that they were of 'a very perplexing character'. Henry had detained the courier for more than ten days, intending to despatch him from hour to hour, while the Privy Council frequently deliberated.

Chapuys spoke with Jocquin but the French ambassador seemed as much in the dark as he was, or at least professed as much. Jocquin told Chapuys quite candidly that, however amiable and polite towards him the English seemed at times, even if Henry's people were to reveal the secret to the French ambassador, 'they would remain English, and he French'.[108] It was a sentiment that no doubt resonated with the Imperial ambassador.

Chapuys is known to have had little patience with the French but, as we have seen, he certainly did not go out of his way to avoid them. Chapuys confided both to de Granvelle and Charles that he felt Jocquin showed little affection for the English. The ambassador noted a marked attempt on Jocquin's part to cultivate a relationship with Chapuys, who was receptive, even going so far as to suggest that he and Chapuys take the same barge when visiting the Privy Council.[109] Chapuys mentions that Jocquin had gleefully pointed out that nothing would annoy the English as much as seeing the two ambassadors 'privately and amiably conversing together'.[110] It was enough to give Chapuys pause and, while he cultivated a relationship with the French ambassador, he was careful not to divulge anything that could profit France.[111]

In July, Chapuys reported a few salacious pieces of gossip. The Marquis of Dorset, Henry Grey (father to Jane Grey, later queen for nine days before being beheaded), was banished from court when Anne and Henry accused him of recruiting men against them in Cornwall and the adjacent counties. Grey was a loyal supporter of Katherine's cause, and Chapuys suspected this was the real cause of his banishment. Grey was not the only courtier to incur Anne's wrath: Henry's old friend, Charles Brandon, who had always been at odds with Anne, had already made the mistake years before of suggesting that Anne had been romantically linked to the court poet, Thomas Wyatt.[112]

Brandon had been banished from court for some time, but now, Chapuys reported, all was forgiven, between Henry and Brandon at least. Anne, however, had not let the matter drop and, because of the attack on her virtue, now accused Brandon of 'having criminal intercourse with his own daughter'.[113] Nothing came of this, save that

Brandon and Anne were clearly not going to mend fences. However, what Chapuys' report does exemplify is Henry's lack of control over his mistress, and his inability to please friends and Anne at the same time. Henry would face another loss in July, when Henry Guildford, a loyal courtier and Comptroller of the King's Household, became more vocal in his opposition to Henry's mistress. Anne would have none of it and threatened him in person, assuring him that once she became queen, he would be on his way out. Guildford hotly retorted that he would save her the trouble, and immediately quit his post, but not before making Henry aware that had been threatened. Guildford rejected Henry's pleas to reconsider, and left.[114]

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Despite losing many of his closest friends and allies, Henry was gaining confidence. On 11 July 1531, after twenty-two years of marriage to Katherine, without ceremony, Henry rode out towards Woodstock with Anne and his court, leaving his wife and daughter. Katherine would never see him again.

Among the customs Henry and Katherine had shared over a lifetime was sending each other messages every three days when they were apart. It is a romantic gesture, and something that, like Henry's shirts, had been hard for Henry to give up. However, once he had decided to leave his wife, he was resolved not to falter. Having discovered that Henry had left without a farewell, Katherine sent a messenger after her husband to inquire about his health and, as Chapuys wrote,

> signify the regret she had experienced at not having been able to see him before his departure for the country. For since she had been told that she could not have the pleasure and happiness of following him in his journey she imagined that she might at least have had the consolation of bidding him adieu.[115]

Henry was furious that Katherine had not gotten his albeit vague hint that he was leaving her for good, and barked at the messenger, ordering him to tell Katherine that he did not want her 'adieu'.

Chapuys wrote that Henry had declared:

> She had hitherto caused him much annoyance and sorrow in a thousand ways, and particularly by her attempting to disgrace and humiliate him by a summons to appear personally at Rome, and by her having also obstinately refused the very just and reasonable request made by the members of his Privy Council and other noble personages of his Kingdom.[116]

He wanted no more messages from his wife.

Katherine received the news with some surprise, and immediately composed a letter to Henry. She was, Chapuys wrote, 'exceedingly sorry at hearing of his anger and displeasure. She had given no cause

or occasion for it, for whatever she had undertaken had been done with his permission and consent, and for the honour and relief of each other's conscience, as he [the King] was perfectly aware'.[117]

Henry and Katherine, as is often the case with warring couples, were each determined to have the last word. Despite his declaration that he would no longer speak to Katherine, he read her letter and replied, stating that she knew she was lying about the consummation of her first marriage, and that Pope Julius had been wrong to grant a dispensation.

Henry's aggressive letter gave Katherine cause for concern. She confided to the ambassador that she feared Henry had received an indication from Clement that he was about to pronounce sentence in Henry's favour. Chapuys, as usual, worked hard to allay her fears and boost her confidence. He persuaded her that Henry's aggressive language showed his fear and despair that the case would never be resolved, rather than his confidence in a favourable outcome. Katherine was briefly consoled, but news from France that Francis had persuaded the Pope to grant yet another delay in the divorce proceedings plunged her into more despair. Once more Chapuys strove to keep her spirits up, immediately messaging her that Francis had been shown little favour by Clement in the past. No one, it seemed, could calm Katherine as quickly and effectively as the Imperial ambassador even with a simple sentence in a letter. In her reply, Katherine told him his letter had calmed her fears and soothed her sorrow.

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In August, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, Chapuys' old friend and influential humanist and scholar, finally wrote in regards to the divorce, as Chapuys had requested of him. Agrippa wrote to Chapuys and Katherine that he 'had sound reasons and incontrovertible arguments to prove that her marriage was legitimate'.[118] Agrippa then suggested that Katherine urge Charles to order him to make public his declaration in her favour. This was a brief diversion from his current predicament; she was fighting Henry over her lodgings. She had been ordered to leave Richmond and reside in the More in Hertfordshire, an undesirable estate full of draughty corridors. Isolated from court at the More, and with her daughter sent to Richmond and Henry refusing to communicate, Katherine was grief-stricken that her immediate family had been torn asunder.

Relations between Charles and Henry had become further strained, something which Francis exploited.

In October, Chapuys heard a rumour at court that Francis and Charles were preparing to meet, a rumour which Henry's councillors demanded that Chapuys clarify. Chapuys' secretary, Juan de Montoya,

told the astonished Norfolk that the report was true, and Chapuys was awaiting the official announcement. The duke's reaction, de Montoya reported to Chapuys, bordered on panic. He said nothing, but had other courtiers keep de Montoya occupied while he dashed to Henry's apartments, where they were ensconced for an hour. Chapuys reported that de Montoya was then called into Henry's apartments, along with Thomas More and Boleyn. Norfolk informed de Montoya that Henry would do nothing to prevent the meeting. However, Henry was clearly displeased. Norfolk rather superciliously added that Henry doubted the meeting would take place, and even if it did it would be unimportant and futile. Henry was confident in his relationship with Francis, confident enough to assure de Montoya that neither he nor Francis would take a step of such importance without the knowledge and consent of the other.[119]

Chapuys reported that Norfolk went as far as to warn de Montoya that 'before three days are over (said the Duke to my secretary) you will witness the effect and evidence of that firm friendship to which I allude, and you may tell your master, the ambassador, so'.[120]

By the end of this political tug of war over Francis, Norfolk's 'three days' had increased to eight. Still, Henry's prediction that a meeting between Charles and Francis would never take place was indeed correct, and Chapuys reported that the court was delighted by news of a rupture in the negotiations. The French, eager to keep Henry on side, distanced themselves from the incident, accusing Charles of having suggested the meeting in the first place. The French ambassador Jocquin earnestly told Chapuys that Francis had certainly never contemplated such a meeting.

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By July 1531 it was clear to Henry's court, as well as the courts of Europe, that Bishop Fisher was still Henry's main obstacle to a divorce from Katherine. Fisher had survived an attempt on his life, and continued to fight Anne and Henry in his determination to uphold Katherine's cause. Anne still considered him a dangerous threat, and Chapuys reported that, of all the men of court, Anne feared Fisher most.[121]

This assessment was correct. He reported that Anne had sent Fisher a private message, suggesting that he stay away from court and especially Parliament 'for fear he should catch fever, as he did the previous year'.[122] Chapuys does not seem to take the message as a veiled threat, as some historians do, but rather Anne is advising him to keep out of her affairs.But Fisher's response was that he was even more determined to speak out against Anne and in Katherine's favour.

In late July, Katherine wrote to her nephew, citing Chapuys' report that Clement was still considering holding the divorce hearing

somewhere other than Rome. This, after years of papal vacillation, made her utterly despondent. She confided in her nephew that she had no idea what to make of Clement's behaviour. Her next words are a strong indication of her desperation: if the cause was heard anywhere other than Rome, Katherine said, 'bribes, and promises of all sorts will be distributed with such profusion that the judges, whoever they may be, will fain declare that white is black, and doubt will be thrown on the truth of my word'.[123] It was Clement's hesitation, in her mind, that was forcing Henry's hand and helping facilitate his break with Rome.[124]

Later that month, Chapuys reported that Henry appointed Dr Lee and Stephen Gardiner as archbishops of York and Winchester respectively. Neither Chapuys nor Katherine failed to see the significance of such a move: Henry had two more prelates in his power when parliament resumed.[125]

The move precipitated yet another attempt to force Katherine to yield. Again Chapuys reported that Katherine had visitors, but he focused on, and perhaps emphasised, Katherine's emotional triumph over them rather than the reality of the visit.

The two men, Drs Lee and Sampson, dropped to their knees, begging her for the sake of her daughter, herself and the kingdom to allow the case to be resolved in England. Threats of moving her to damp and isolated residences and separating her from Mary had failed to persuade her; now they said that, were she to acquiesce, Henry promised to treat her better.[126]

Katherine mirrored their actions, kneeling herself. With great admiration, Chapuys reported that

> she began to pray for each and every one of those present for the sake of God's honour and glory … for the discharge of the King's conscience and their own, and for the removal of such a scandalous example to Christendom, to persuade the King their master, to return to her, since he well knew that she was his true and legitimate wife.[127]

The two men had made the mistake of holding a public audience with Katherine in front of her household, so she made sure that her responses to their quiet entreaties were clear and easily heard by all. These bystanders, Chapuys predicted, would no doubt spread the word of Katherine's courage, and Henry's constant badgering. He wrote that some of those present, including her visitors, were moved to pity by her words, and in some cases even tears.[128]

The men's task no doubt seemed mean-spirited. They warned Katherine that Henry had three options for her if she refused: she could stay at the More, which was uncomfortable enough; move somewhere even more desolate; or retire to an abbey. Katherine

snapped that, as she obviously had no choice, she would follow wherever he commanded, even if it were to a fiery stake.[129]

Chapuys' despatches to Charles and Pedro Ortiz capture these very different aspects of Katherine's personality. She was a victim of Henry's will, but by no means weak; she knew the power of public display, and played to the gallery. Her quiet composure masked her steely and occasionally fiery nature. Decades earlier, she had led the English Army out to defend her new country against Scotland while Henry was elsewhere fighting the French. The Katherine kneeling humbly before the two bishops was the same woman who triumphantly sent her husband the Scottish king's blood-stained cloak.[130]

Katherine may have again scored a point against Henry, but Chapuys the realist pointed out that she was likely to suffer for it in the long run, and would no doubt be moved to even worse estates.[131] Once more, he nagged Charles to write to Clement and demand immediate action on the divorce. More than two years had passed since the legatine court at Blackfriars had adjourned without conclusion. Henry was already living with Anne and had cut Katherine off completely; surely, the ambassador fumed, this was unacceptable.[132] He saw the personal toll the issue had taken on Katherine, and Mary. As the princess matured, the ambassador increasingly admired her, and every delay and hesitation hurt him personally.

The ambassador was, however, pleased to learn from Norfolk that Henry had at last visited Mary, if only briefly. He told Charles that Henry seemed pleased to see his only child and, in a moment of affection, promised he would visit her more often. Mary, now fifteen, had not seen her father for some months. Chapuys was adamant that Henry, despite the obvious affection he showed towards his daughter, would hardly dare have her live with him, or even bring her to court. Chapuys feared that Anne was becoming an impediment to any relationship between Henry and Mary: 'I really believe, however, that the King would have remained longer, and conversed more familiarly with his daughter, the Princess, had not the Lady sent two of her own suite with the King, that they might hear and report what he said to her.'[133]

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The Christmas celebrations of 1531 were held with the usual pomp, and Katherine, while not allowed at court, was given a generous allowance for her own festivities. She could make little use of them in her first Christmas as a discarded queen.

On 4 January 1532, Chapuys related with almost palpable indignation that Katherine had sent a New Year's gift to the king,

despite knowing that he had forbidden such contact with him. The unfortunate servant who presented the beautifully wrought gold cup bore the brunt of Henry's displeasure, and the cup was sent straight back to Katherine, without acknowledgement. Chapuys added, with resignation, that Anne on the other hand was being lavishly entertained, and presented Henry with exquisitely hand-crafted Biscayan darts.[134] Henry's gifts to her included a room full of cloth of gold and silver, as well as crimson satin and embroideries.[135]

Chapuys told de Granvelle that Katherine was hurt by the king's actions, especially his refusal to allow her to stay in estates of her choosing: 'She has suffered enough and can't stand it anymore.'

The More was old and draughty, but it wasn't the worst estate Henry could have sent her to – that would come.

Katherine told Chapuys that she would rather be sent as a prisoner to the Tower of London; her sufferings could not be greater than they already were, and in the Tower her misfortunes would at last be widely known. She believed that everyone would pray God to arm her with patience and inspire Henry with kinder sentiments towards her.[136] Henry's courtiers never saw this side of Katherine, her weak and vulnerable moments when she allowed her composed mask to drop. Only to Chapuys was she so honest about her fears; only he saw the toll that her bravery was taking on her.

Chapuys was not in a position to see the personal side of Anne, but he had people in his service who were. In June, Chapuys recorded an incident that sheds light on the relationship between Anne and her father. A young priest had been found guilty of filing the shavings from angelots, French coins. The ambassador reported that he did this out of simplicity rather than malice, but Henry had him imprisoned, due either to his violent dislike of priests or desire to please Anne.[137] Thomas Boleyn interceded for the priest, asking Henry to spare him, but to no avail. Anne publicly berated her father, telling him that he should not speak for priests as there were already too many in England.[138] One could argue that in reporting this incident, Chapuys was implying that it was Anne who was driving Henry away from Rome, not the Boleyn family. Yet what the ambassador highlights is that Thomas was of a different generation, before there was any notion of Reformation-style religious schism; he was brought up believing in the Catholicism of sixteenth-century England. Anne and George were born in another century and influenced by new and potentially heretical ideas. I would suggest that after his failed embassy to Bologna in 1530 Thomas developed a marked antipathy towards the papacy, but still held moderate religious views. This seems to have stemmed more from the ill-treatment he received and outright rejection at the hands of the Emperor, who so obviously

controlled the Pope. It was the political element that began to affect his decisions at this point.

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Under Cromwell's guidance, Henry continued to bully the English clergy and Parliament into confirming their allegiance to him rather than the Pope. In March 1532 a Supplication of the Commons against the Ordinaries, drafted by Cromwell, was delivered to Henry listing various grievances against the Church. Henry presented it to the clergy and Parliament, alleging that the English clergy's oaths to the Pope contradicted their oaths to the Crown. He insisted that all clerical legislation would henceforth require royal assent, and existing legislation must be submitted for his approval as well; all laws must emanate from the Crown alone. Both Parliament and clergy reluctantly succumbed, rather than face potential charges of treason. Sir Thomas More immediately resigned as Lord Chancellor; he could see where all this was leading.

Next, Cromwell introduced an Act to change payment to the Pope of annates – the first year's revenue from a newly appointed bishop's see. Rather than the whole amount, the Pope would now receive only 5 per cent. However, cleverly, the Act would take effect only at the king's pleasure. Thus, Henry had a potential stranglehold over a major source of papal revenue.

In August, the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Warham, died and was replaced by the more pliable Thomas Cranmer. Henry and his reform-minded supporters, such as the Boleyns, now had the means of advancing their cause against Rome without sacrificing their adherence to Christianity.

In July 1532, Chapuys reported that Henry had suddenly turned back from a season of hunting in the North and he listed the various causes being spread about. One was that Anne's presence had caused a stir, and the common people, especially women, were so insulted by her presence that they began hooting and hissing as she passed, forcing the couple to retrace their steps.[139] Chapuys' report has often been labelled as exaggerated, an attempt to give Charles and Mary of Hungary a false view of the people's attitude towards Anne. This account of public hostility to Anne is not without merit, considering how popular Katherine was. However, Chapuys in fact dismisses it as no more than a rumour. He gives more credence to an alternative rumour that Henry was reacting cautiously to recent Scottish raids up north, in which one of his captains was slain.[140]

Much of the latter half of 1532 was taken up with an impending conference between Francis and Henry to be held in Calais, where a peace treaty would be signed. Chapuys caught wind of the proposed meeting early in July, and by August was able to report on the

preparations in detail. The cynic in us would perhaps question the timing, mere months after rumours of a meeting between Francis and Charles, but Chapuys refrains from any personal observation.

Henry was exceptionally busy. Ships were being fitted out for the approximately 4,000 members of the party.[141] Henry and Anne were increasingly confident about their position, and Henry no doubt saw the proposed visit with Francis as a step forward in his ambition to have Anne as his wife.

Chapuys was sceptical of the French ambassador's assurances that no ladies would be present at the Calais meeting; in fact he had been informed by Katherine (who had her own informants in Anne's household) that Anne too was making preparations for herself and her train of ladies. Would Henry and Anne marry in Calais?

The Imperial ambassador gave no indication that he truly believed the marriage would ever occur – it had been dragging on now for several years – but he was alarmed by Anne's confidence.

> Lady Anne must be labouring under a strange delusion, for she considers herself so sure of success that not later than a week ago she wrote a letter to her principal friend and favourite here, whom she holds as sister and companion, bidding her get ready against this journey and interview [meeting], where, she says, that which she has been so long wishing for will be accomplished.[142]

Anne's letter to this friend, possibly Anne Gainsford, contains another of those famous quotes that have become a part of Anne's story. Anne, despite her place in Henry's heart, had no titles to recommend her, and Henry, ever conscious of public perceptions, wished to raise her status. He held a lavish ceremony, which Chapuys attended, in which Anne was created Marquess of Pembroke (or, as Chapuys wrote it, Penebroc), the only woman to receive such a peerage. He reported little about the ceremony, which was not unusual for Chapuys; as we have seen, he rarely bothered to write in detail about Henry's pageants and masques. He did, however, report on the finances, which as a lawyer he found more interesting. The title of marquess attracted an impressive revenue of 4,000 ducats a year, bestowing on Anne one of the highest peerages in England. Anne's elevation, while no doubt an irritation for Chapuys, was not nearly as troubling as the proposed treaty between France and England.

We are heavily dependent on Chapuys' record of the preparations for Calais and the plans that were made; he is exceptionally detailed, considering he was out of the political loop. Chapuys knew that Francis and Henry would meet between Boulogne and Calais, before feasting for three consecutive days and returning to Calais, where Anne would await them. The Imperial ambassador reported gloomily

that it was all Henry talked about, but admitted that 'he has every reason to be satisfied with his success, as far as he himself and his Kingdom are concerned, for this is a sort of pleasure which he may well keep to himself'.[143]

Chapuys knew well that the French owed Anne an enormous debt. She had influenced Henry to favour a French–English alliance. With Wolsey, their previous political backer, out of the game, they were entirely dependent on Anne to promote the French cause.

Henry entertained the French embassy, and Anne held a banquet in their honour. On the evening of the banquet, to which Chapuys was not invited, he grabbed the French ambassador and smugly relayed Charles's success against the Turks. Chapuys noted that this reminder of Charles's military might displeased the French ambassador.[144]

Chapuys confided to the Emperor that he had heard Henry and Anne were annoyed by the news that Francis's choice of female counterpart for Anne during the visit to Calais, Marguerite of Navarre, was too ill to attend. It was a blow to Anne, who had spent her formative years serving Marguerite's sister-in-law, Queen Claude, and would have known Marguerite well. Chapuys took the excuse at face value, having no reason to suspect an intentional snub. However, he was amused by Francis's last-minute replacement for Marguerite: his mistress of some years, Anne de Pisseleu d'Heilly. Henry and Anne insisted that a royal mistress was hardly suitable company, but as far as Chapuys was concerned this was a case of the pot calling the kettle black: '[These people] do not see the beam in their own eyes whilst they quickly find out the mote in those of others.'[145]

There was another matter, more frivolous in Chapuys' opinion: Anne's attire. Before Anne could meet Francis, she needed one last sign that she had defeated Katherine. Henry sent Norfolk to acquire the queen's jewels, several pieces of which were actually gifts from Katherine's mother. Katherine replied that she could not present her jewels to Henry, as the last time she had presented him with a gift (the infamous chalice), 'he warned me to refrain from such presents in future'. She would not, according to Chapuys, give up her jewels to 'ornament a person who is the scandal of Christendom'.[146]

However, Katherine did not refuse to obey outright, she retorted that, if he had an express command, she would relinquish them. The command came swiftly, and she acquiesced.

The court made its way across the Channel on 11 October 1532. Chapuys had not been invited and remained in London, but he had sent several spies who kept him well informed. When the court did return, weeks later, Chapuys was on the lookout for any distinct change in behaviour between Henry and Anne, and towards him. He immediately begged an audience and was greeted cheerfully by

Henry, who was in good spirits. He resisted the urge to enquire about the trip, hoping Henry would bring it up. When nothing about Calais seemed forthcoming, Chapuys looked for inspiration, and began speaking of the safest topic that came to him: the weather.

> I myself ventured to broach the subject, and remarked that God had been pleased to favour the meeting [with Francis] by sending such fine weather for it, and that this was no wonder to me since the object of the interview as publicly stated, was exclusively for His service and the good of Christendom.[147]

Henry replied that no finer weather could have been wished for, as the exclusive object of the meeting with Francis (which Chapuys was certainly not going to ask about) had indeed been the welfare of Christendom. The ambassador did not at first wish to speculate whether the visit to France had been a subterfuge for a wedding, but his counterpart in Rome, Miguel Mai, was certain – erroneously – that a marriage had occurred.[148]

The year 1533 would be a pivotal one at court, a year in which relationships were tested and unprecedented crises arose. Early in January, Chapuys wrote of his concern about Katherine, whose confidence had been bolstered by a rumour that Henry was showing repentance at the separation. This was, in Katherine's opinion, proof that God had touched his heart, and he would now acknowledge his error.[149] It was obviously a worrying frame of mind, and the ambassador writes with an almost sad resignation that he could not share her hopes. He believed that, even if there was a hint of truth to it, it would have nothing to do with Henry's conscience and more to do with fear of the unpopularity of his latest marriage.[150] Chapuys suspected the king had already made his next move, as it was rumoured that Henry had married an already pregnant Anne in England on 25 January.[151]

It was in these few months of 1533 that the new generation of power players came to the forefront, two men with whom Chapuys would have very different relationships: Thomas Cromwell and Thomas Cranmer. These men would redefine the divorce and the English Reformation.

They would also ultimately become victims of their own political and religious machinations.

Pawn to Queen

> *I said they had had good experience in former times, the whole kingdom having been disturbed by the Wars of the Roses; though it seems nowadays as if they wished to sharpen the thorns of those very roses.*
>
> Chapuys, 1533

Chapuys was so wrapped up in the daily drama of Henry and his women that we may be forgiven for thinking he was engaged in little else. Yet Chapuys was a key player in a wide and elaborate game of diplomacy, not only in England, but with the Imperial ambassadors in Rome and throughout the Holy Roman Empire.

The five Imperial ambassadors with whom Chapuys corresponded – Anthoine and his father Nicholas Perrenot, Michael Mai, Giovan Antonio Muxetula and Pedro Ortiz – had a complex and precarious relationship. Both Perrenots were old friends of the Imperial ambassador, Mai and Muxetula were Imperial ambassadors to Rome, and Pedro Ortiz was a Spanish theologian who had been sent to Rome to argue Katherine's case.

Ortiz, Mai and Muxetula engaged in an almost constant feud. A clash of personalities and agendas complicated what should have been cordial relationships, and Chapuys had to exert the utmost caution in his letters to each. Mai was a naturally suspicious man, who refused to put any stock in what Clement professed, and went even further than Chapuys in his criticisms of the Pope. Clement had been described by Mai as 'low minded' and 'sordidly avaricious'. Had Chapuys been aware of Mai's description of Clement to Charles, he might have felt more confident in his own, albeit respectful, complaints about the Pope. Mai believed that Muxetula was too compliant when it came to Clement, and accused him of working against Charles's best interests. With an embassy of such internal divisions, it is unsurprising that so little was accomplished. Mai was Spanish and Muxetula Italian, which had its own problems. It is a reflection of Chapuys' integrity that, although he was a Savoyard and therefore more aligned to France than Spain, Charles put such faith in him. Ortiz could not abide either Muxetula or Mai, accusing both of not going far enough in their criticisms. Ortiz was so notorious for his caustic reports about the Pope, Henry and Anne that Muxetula and Mai felt the need to distance themselves in the interest of self-preservation. Mai and Muxetula's vitriolic relationship would last until Muxetula's recall, an event which pleased Mai. These were the men with whom Chapuys had to contend, three warring individuals who were in effect chasing the same goals but could not get out of their own way. Nothing in Chapuys' life was simple.

Chapuys, Mai and Ortiz corresponded monthly, and the weariness in their letters adds a very human element to what is otherwise succinct and businesslike correspondence between colleagues. However, there are issues which can create havoc for historians. The despatches often took a month to reach the addressees, so the letters form disjointed conversations: for example, Chapuys asks Mai a particular question in one letter that Mai has already answered in his previous letter which has obviously not yet reached the ambassador. On top of the stress the divorce was causing, personal tragedies clearly affected these men and some despatches are poignant windows into their personal lives. Chapuys lost relatives to the plague in Annecy and Mai's son died suddenly in 1531. Even in the otherwise businesslike letters we see their pain, and often their personal feuds. There are also letters of friendship. The few letters we have from Nicholas Perrenot to Chapuys contain personal detail interspersed with orders from Charles:

> You will use all diligence and dexterity possible besides the great food that in particular could ensue … you hear enough [at court], this would be the true means to reach the fruits and acknowledgements of your long and agreeable services, in which you can be assured I will always serve as a true and entirely good friend, and also to place your provision and advancement when it comes to supplying and distributing the vacant benefices.

These relationships and letters offer a crucial and often overlooked insight into Chapuys' life beyond the court.

Inside the court, however, Chapuys could not escape the royal battle between the king and his two queens. Although Anne and Chapuys only came face to face once in his entire embassy, it is surprising that their views of each other were so intensely personal – and a preoccupation of many Tudor historians.

Chapuys' resentment towards Anne arose from Henry's treatment of Katherine and Mary. He could not directly or openly censure Henry, but could focus the blame on Anne. Yet if we were to believe all accusations against Anne which have been attributed to Chapuys, sometimes erroneously, then we would have little sympathy for her fate. The conflicting views we have of Chapuys and Anne must be reconciled, as they are not mutually exclusive. A hagiographical view of Anne is as impractical as a purely negative interpretation, which is true of any historical character. We should not take all of Chapuys' criticisms about Anne at face value, but nor can we afford to dismiss them; after all, his fifteen years of valuable insights have given us the colour and taste of the Tudor court. In a sense, it is through the detailed reports and fragments collected by Chapuys over the seven years he knew her that Anne emerges as a more complex, paradoxical

and, most importantly, human and fallible figure.

There are two incorrect assumptions about Chapuys' reports regarding Anne and her daughter Elizabeth that a close review of his original letters will dispel. One is that throughout his embassy, Chapuys' titles of choice for Anne were 'la Putain' and 'the concubine'. Another term, 'The Lady', has also been interpreted as disparaging, although Chapuys also uses this for other women at court. Another assumption is that he always referred to Elizabeth as 'the little bastard'.

The truth is that Chapuys refers to Anne as 'the Concubine' in one heated letter in 1533, and then not again until 1535 through to her execution. Most of his letters refer to her as 'the Lady' or 'Lady Anne', 'the new Marchioness' and so on. He certainly never called her queen. It is true that Chapuys did occasionally refer to Elizabeth as 'the little bastard', but more often it was simply 'the king's daughter', or 'other daughter', and never princess.

Why is the view that he only used pejorative terms for Anne and Elizabeth so entrenched? The answer could be a mixture of mistaken identity and growing sympathy and admiration for Anne. Pedro Ortiz, Katherine's proctor in Rome, was a passionate defender of the queen, and his reports to Chapuys and Charles are vitriolic about Henry's second wife, whereas Chapuys' language is more moderate. In most of his letters, Ortiz referred to Anne as 'the concubine', and did so as early as 1531:

> If he does not at once separate from his concubine and restore the Queen to the possession of her matrimonial rights, the cause will not be over so soon.[1]
>
> Then will be the time for these law-suits and litigations to be put an end to, for though the King may send his mandate, still if he do not cast away from him this concubine of his, and restore the Queen.[2]

I would argue that the pejorative descriptions of Anne belong more to Ortiz but have become attached to Chapuys – the two characters have become confused. It must be said, however, that most of the Imperial embassy used 'concubine' for Anne, including Charles himself; his ambassadors were possibly guided by his choice of words.

Chapuys was not responsible for every negative rumour spread about Anne; he was hardly the only person to criticise her. One prevailing myth, that Anne had a sixth finger, has lingered in history texts and fiction for centuries. The dubious honour for this rests with Nicholas Sander, an English Catholic priest born in 1530, whose book, *The Growth of Anglican Schism*, had a religious agenda, as the title suggests. In it he unequivocally blames Anne for the break with the Church. Sander in effect did more damage to Anne's reputation in one

book than Chapuys ever did in all his despatches. Chapuys was not known for descriptions of a woman's appearance, seemingly believing they were irrelevant, and thus even today we still have only the Venetian ambassador's brusque appraisal of Anne's beauty:

> Madam Anne is not one of the handsomest women in the world; she is of middling stature, swarthy complexion, long neck, wide mouth, bosom not much raised, and in fact has nothing but the English King's great appetite; and her eyes, which are black and beautiful, and take great effect on those who served the Queen when she was on the throne.[3]

Somewhat more important than Anne's general appearance were signs of divine approval or rejection of the marriage. All foreign ambassadors were on the lookout for an indication that the marriage had God's blessing or otherwise. Given the lengths to which Henry went to wed his second wife, it is hardly surprising that remarkable sightings began to appear. The Venetian ambassador gloomily reported that 'in May two fish were caught in the Thames, each measuring thirty feet in length, ten feet high, and eleven feet broad'. The female

> had two cubs in its belly. The one was taken at Greenwich, the other at the Tower of London. The people here in general consider this a phenomenon foreboding future evil, which they likewise anticipate from the fact that within the last few days fourteen individuals, including men and women, have committed suicide by hanging, or drowned themselves in the Thames.[4]

Chapuys preferred to report more substantial details to his superiors and makes no mention of these 'omens'.

Chapuys focused instead on whether Henry's second marriage had indeed taken place, despite the threat of excommunication.[5] He also reported that, in the presence of numerous courtiers, Anne had declared that she would very soon be married, to which her father had added that Henry would marry his daughter soon, and once it was sanctioned by Parliament it would be much easier to conciliate opponents.

In March 1533, the ambassador reports that Anne hosted a lavish banquet for the king in her apartments, which was attended by many nobles including the Duke of Norfolk and his wife, Suffolk and Thomas Cromwell. Anne sat at the king's right hand, raised above all other guests. Henry jested with Norfolk and his wife, asking them if they thought their niece had a fine dowry and a rich marriage portion. We have no record of their reaction to his remark but Chapuys was surprised at Henry's confidence that he would soon be married again. Chapuys was indignant, too, that while the court feasted, Katherine and Mary continued to be spurned. The concerned ambassador

reported that Henry had recently forced Katherine to leave the More and move to Ampthill, ignoring her request that she at least be given several days to set her affairs in order.[6]

In late January, Thomas Cranmer returned from Germany, where he had been serving as ambassador to the Emperor, and was immediately appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, a position which would make him legate of England. Chapuys reported that the appointment had taken many by surprise, as it was not the custom to fill a vacancy within the space of a year; Warham had been dead a mere five months.[7]

Chapuys knew that Cranmer was appointed for one purpose: to expedite the divorce proceedings by having the matter heard in England where Cranmer could preside. Henry, according to Chapuys, had boasted to the Gentlemen of his Privy Chamber that the Pope was now on his side; he declared that Clement had told Charles that, out of love for the Emperor, Clement had in the past refused to allow the case to be heard in England, but could no longer refuse or defer the execution of justice.[8] Chapuys scoffed at the suggestion, but he faced a dilemma: either Henry was blustering, or his ambassadors in Rome were lying to him. Chapuys made the bold and risky move of asking Charles directly whether such a conversation had occurred between himself and the Pope. It is evident that the ambassador's distrust of Pope Clement's motives had reached new levels, and he rightly suspected that both monarchs were being manipulated. Chapuys observed that the Pope wanted to keep the monarchs on side, 'being the only cause of his tarrying, that he may always keep a hold both over Your Majesty and this king'.[9]

Chapuys now reviewed the papal brief executed the previous year, which had caused such an uproar as it ordered Henry to remove Anne from court. So it appears that a whole year had been wasted dithering about the entire matter. Chapuys immediately wrote to Charles, in a messy and hastily written letter, to complain that the brief was so poorly constructed it could never have had any effect on Henry. However, Chapuys had to be more circumspect with Clement and wrote to him only subtly criticising the papal brief, commenting, 'He [the Pope] would no doubt be required to yield and decree a relaxation of this [ultimatum] as he is known to have done with the other [brief].'[10]

Merely threatening that Henry must leave Anne, or that she must leave him, was futile; Chapuys now knew that only a papal judgement on the divorce would resolve the issue. The second part of this despatch to Charles is rushed; Chapuys delayed the courier while he added his latest piece of news, scrawling it across, around and down the side of his letter: the papal nuncio, Borgho, had told him that

Cambrai in northern France was a possible venue in which to hear the divorce instead of Rome or England. Chapuys did not dismiss this idea, deciding to consult Katherine first.[11]

But Anne and Henry were widely believed to be married; in their opinion there was nothing to discuss. It is believed they married in a secret ceremony in late January of 1533. The order for Henry to dismiss Anne from court was now superfluous, but Henry advised that he would accept a dispensation for his second marriage should Clement grant one. According to Pedro Ortiz, a claim for a dispensation was possible, given that Henry had had carnal relations with Anne's sister Mary years before. The irony was not lost on Ortiz, Chapuys or, indeed, the rest of Europe: Henry was happy to apply for a dispensation based on a proven degree of affinity with Anne's sister Mary, who had previously been Henry's mistress, but wanted a divorce based on a rumoured degree of affinity between Katherine and Henry's brother Arthur. Henry stubbornly asserted that it was all a matter of conscience, and Henry's conscience was consummately adaptable.[12]

Pope Clement verbally abused the hapless English ambassador, Gregory Casale, who had the unfortunate task of asking again for the dispensation, and who assured the Pope that for Henry it was indeed a matter of conscience. Clement was scathing.

> How is it, then, that your master, the king, before the sentence was pronounced, and even before he had married this Anne, lived openly with her; and how can he conscientiously deny the validity of a former papal dispensation to annul his marriage to Katherine, when he presumes to ask for a similar one to marry this Anne notwithstanding his connexion with her sister?[13]

Casale had no answer. However resolute regarding the divorce Clement appeared to be, Chapuys now began to distrust his representative in England, Borgho.

In late February 1533, Borgho was immersed in talks with Norfolk and Henry. A spy of Chapuys' informed him of the meeting, and he immediately took a boat from his lodgings near the Tower to Greenwich, to interrogate the nuncio. Borgho strenuously denied that any meeting had taken place, despite the eyewitness accounts, which raised alarm bells with the ambassador. Borgho was trying Chapuys' patience. He warned Borgho not to push the matter too far with Henry. 'Borgho answered me rather irrelevantly that he was a poor gentleman living on a salary paid for his services, and could not do otherwise.'[14]

When further pressed, Borgho supported the view that the matter not be heard in Rome, which would definitely please Henry. The implication was that Clement privately wished to be done with the

business, and would rather the burden fall elsewhere. On hearing this from Chapuys, Katherine, who had for so long placed her future in Clement's hands and trusted him to judge the matter with absolute impartiality, became hysterical. She began to abuse Clement for leaving her to languish for over three and a half years. Rather than pronounce a sentence one way or the other, she wailed, he was happy to prolong her miserable state. All the earlier accusations of Henry's councillors that she had lived in concubinage with Henry came flooding back, accusations which she had hitherto kept at bay. She accused Clement of being content to let her die of grief, under the stigma of having been the king's concubine for over twenty years. It was an exhausting state of limbo that Clement had had forced on both parties, Katherine railed, but Henry would not be held to ransom by anyone and avoided the issue by ignoring Clement and moving on. Katherine, on the other hand, clung to a papal decision which looked less and less likely to ever come.[15]

Chapuys had rarely seen Katherine in such a state, and wrote to Charles that he must solicit and urge the decision of her cause. Even if Henry disobeyed the papal decision, which Katherine insisted he would not despite Chapuys dubiousness, she at least could live with the knowledge that the Pope had made a decision, and Mary would not lose her right to the succession.

Katherine ordered the already beleaguered ambassador to immediately write to Charles, as she was too alarmed and anxious to compose her thoughts. Clement had to give his consent for Cranmer to be consecrated as archbishop, and the papal bulls were already drawn up. Chapuys hastily wrote to him, advising him to delay the bulls until after the case had been brought to a decision, so that Cranmer's involvement could be neutralised and the matter not brought to England. The ambassador also recommended that Clement demand that Cranmer not be involved; his spies had kept him well informed and he was right to be concerned, as he reported that Cranmer had taken two priests into his service who had preached sermons against the queen.[16]

Clement ignored Chapuys' warnings. In late March the bulls for the archbishopric of Canterbury arrived. Chapuys' account of Henry's reaction to the consecration of his new archbishop is almost comical, despite the gravity of the situation. Chapuys wrote that Henry was on his feet instantly, not wishing to waste another moment of being married to Katherine, and called a convocation at once, demanding the matter be decided immediately. The prelates, according to Chapuys, had not even had time to eat their meal, and were so badgered by Henry that not one of them dared open their mouth. Only Cardinal Fisher, Katherine's harassed counsel, stood against the rest of

the convocation. Chapuys wrote that both Fisher and Katherine now saw the case as irretrievably lost; he was inclined to agree. Reporting that Anne's household had already been appointed, Chapuys wrote that 'all people here cry "murder" against the Pope for his procrastination in this affair'.[17] Of course Chapuys could be exaggerating the issue here, but the frustration with the Pope on all sides is undeniable. Chapuys felt it his duty to report that numerous courtiers, including Norfolk, Suffolk, and most certainly those who supported Katherine, now publicly declared that the Pope would in the end betray Charles too.

If England turned away from Rome it would be on Clement's head as far as Chapuys was concerned. He predicted that the Pope would be the one in the end to repent 'for he will undoubtedly lose his authority in this kingdom – a highly scandalous result for the whole of Christendom as well as a most injurious proceeding against the Queen'.[18]

Henry did not delay and immediately determined that Cranmer should preside over the divorce. Anne's coronation would now take place immediately after Easter.

Whether Katherine liked it or not, her marriage to Henry was over, and as he had moved on so must she. Thus began a new campaign to have her accept her new status of princess dowager. It was the same title she had held following Arthur's death over twenty years ago. With increasing incredulity, Chapuys reported Katherine's accounts of the meetings between herself and Henry's determined councillors.

The ambassador reported that the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, and the Earl of Oxford, whose daughter Frances was now married to Norfolk's son, intended to visit Katherine. They informed her that 'she need not trouble herself about returning to Henry, for he had already taken another wife, and that in future she must abstain from calling herself or being addressed as queen, as he would give her the title of duchess only'.[19]

The next day, as Chapuys reported, Norfolk, accompanied by yet another convoy of nobles, perhaps requiring the safety of numbers, visited Katherine and repeated that she was to renounce her title of queen. Norfolk informed Katherine that there was little point in her fighting the king any more, as his marriage to Anne had occurred more than two months prior (which suggests that 25 January is the correct date). The Earl of Oxford then told Katherine after Easter Henry would no longer provide for her personal expenses or the wages of her servants.[20]

Henry, as far as Chapuys could tell, wanted Katherine to retire to a small estate, and live on a meagre allowance. Chapuys reacted as any lawyer would for his client: he began to negotiate this allowance with

Henry, thereby showing him that Katherine was willing to compromise. If Chapuys could no longer fight the divorce battle, he might at least ensure that Katherine got the divorce settlement she needed to withdraw with dignity.[21]

However, his client was unyielding and bitter. Katherine, according to Chapuys, ignored the order, and declared that she would call herself queen as long as she lived. Henry may place her wherever he liked; the only requirements were a confessor, a physician, an apothecary, and two maids for the service of her chamber. Dramatically, she finished her rebuttal by saying that, if those terms were too much to ask, she would 'willingly go about the world begging alms for the love of God'.[22]

Chapuys was amazed at how quickly events were now moving, after so many months of inactivity, but his despatches of 1533 show a change in Henry's behaviour.

> Though the King is by nature kind and generously inclined, the Lady Anne has so changed him that he does not seem the same man. Unless Your Majesty applies a prompt remedy to this evil, the Lady will not relent in her persecution until she dispenses with queen Katharine, as she did once with cardinal Wolsey, whom she did not hate half as much.[23]

A spate of bills were prepared, one of which formally relegated Katherine to princess dowager. However, Chapuys, outraged at the injustice, sought permission to argue a case for Katherine in Parliament. He would have known that Henry would never allow it and was possibly counting on this, for such a refusal would resonate much more and clearly demonstrate that neither Katherine nor Mary had been allowed a hearing for matters concerning succession. Chapuys approached Norfolk first, before finally speaking with Henry on the matter. Henry informed Chapuys that foreigners were not permitted to enter Parliament, as per English custom, to which Chapuys retorted, 'Not all the Parliaments in England could make Mary a bastard.'[24]

Chapuys' letters during Easter again add colour and texture to important events. On Easter Sunday, he reported, with an unusual eye for female dress, that Anne attended Mass, heavy with diamonds and other precious stones, royally attired in a gorgeous suit of tissue. Her train was carried by the Duke of Norfolk's daughter Mary who was betrothed to the Duke of Richmond, Henry's illegitimate son.[25] Anne was conducted to and from the church with greater ceremony than Chapuys was sure had occurred for any former queens on such days. As he had already guessed, Anne had now changed her title of marquess to that of queen, which is how the priests referred to her in their prayers. Many of those attending Mass, including Chapuys, were

shocked; as Chapuys commented, it all felt like a dream, and even those who supported Anne did not know whether to laugh or cry.[26] Henry was making up for lost time.

Just when Henry plucked up the courage to finally ignore the Pope and Charles, rumours that Charles would invade England became a real threat. Improbable though it seemed, the ambassador now needed to be handled with great delicacy. Such a task was not for the brash and bold Norfolk; instead another minister of modest reputation was required – Thomas Cromwell. Cromwell had, for the most part, flown beneath Chapuys' radar until 1533 but, as his responsibilities grew, he drew the attention of the diplomat, and within months Cromwell would eclipse Norfolk as Chapuys' main channel of communication.

It was because of Chapuys' report to Charles that Cromwell took the threat of invasion so seriously, that he removed most of his personal valuables to the Tower; this shows just how imminent this perceived threat seemed.

The ambassador's description of the rest of the court's behaviour under the threat of invasion is a vivid sketch of something close to mass hysteria. For all his breast-beating, Henry was truly terrified of war. Chapuys wrote that the men of court were in various states of panic, as if they had lost their senses, seemingly bewildered at the state of affairs and not knowing how to repair the damage. According to Chapuys, the slightest hint of war would have the king and his court taking flight like a frightened flock of birds. Chapuys knew that the English fears were groundless; Charles had not invaded despite Chapuys urging him to do so over several years.

In fact, Chapuys was now hoping to leave England. He had exhibited unwavering determination and commitment to Katherine's cause, but in the end Henry had a new wife and queen. For Chapuys the matter was closed, he had done his utmost but had ultimately failed Katherine. As he wrote to Charles,

> For this cause I think I ought to be immediately recalled, and most humbly beseech Your Majesty to send the order; not so much to avoid the dangers and troubles that may supervene, for I should consider myself happy to sacrifice my life for the Imperial service, but merely for the above-named considerations.[27]

His hope for recall would not come, and the ambassador had to steel himself for a continuing embassy.

However, there was even more bad news for the despondent ambassador. Bishop Fisher, Katherine's other pillar of strength, had been sent to the Tower.[28] The arrest had been made on the pretence that Fisher had accused George Boleyn, on his recent mission to France, of bribing the High Chancellor of France, the Cardinal of Lorraine. This was allegedly to induce the Pope by money or other

means to ratify Henry's marriage to Anne, or at least to ignore it entirely and say nothing of it. Chapuys declared that he was sure such an action was part of George's mission, although he did not say that George was sent solely with that intention. Nor did he believe that Fisher's remarks about George's mission had anything to do with his arrest, but thought it was due entirely to Fisher's defence of Katherine and the Pope.[29]

When Chapuys did ascertain the real purpose of the mission through informants, it was revealed to be much more complex, and exemplified George's emerging role as a courtier with the first-rate diplomatic skills of his father. Indeed, the misrepresentation of George that has become entrenched through some interpretations of him – that of a preening, handsome but otherwise ineffectual member of court – is not a myth that Chapuys contributed to. Chapuys neither embellished nor devalued George's role at court and within the Boleyn faction.

Chapuys reported that in his view George was an integral part of negotiations between England and France over the growing tension with Scotland, which had in the past been a natural ally of France, and thereby a natural enemy of England. The Scottish King James IV had married Henry's sister Margaret and was becoming more aggressive, raiding the English borders. If France could form a secure alliance with England, a potential threat could be neutralised.

Chapuys' taste for the dramatic continued when he reported that most Englishmen hoped that Charles would send an army to destroy the poisonous influence of Anne and the Boleyn faction. He predicted that the divorce would set a dangerous precedent throughout Europe, and that England would become Lutheran. However, he blamed Henry and his new Archbishop Cranmer, rather than Anne, for cleaving England from Rome.[30]

For more than two years Chapuys had been convinced that no amount of persuasion or legal argument would dissuade Henry from this new marriage. The intelligence he was gathering from his spies, including his major collaborators – German and Flemish merchants in London – was that there was considerable unrest among the merchant class, and that it would not be at all difficult or expensive to overthrow Henry's government. Anne and Henry were blithely unaware of the unrest among the merchants – for the merchants throughout Europe craved stability and certainty. Chapuys continued to try and elicit a promise of military intervention from Charles, pointing to the cruel treatment of Katherine, and Anne's influence over Henry.

> I beg Your Majesty to pardon me if I venture too far on matters which are not my incumbency but the great interest I

> take in Your Majesty's concerns compels me to say that, considering the very great injury done to Madame, your aunt, you can hardly avoid making war upon this king and kingdom, for it is to be feared that the moment this accursed Anne sets her foot firmly in the stirrup she will try to do the Queen all the harm she possibly can, and the Princess also, which is the thing your aunt dreads most.[31]

Chapuys' concerns were not unfounded as Anne and Katherine's volatile relationship had effectively destroyed any chance of a relationship between Mary and Anne. At one point Anne herself had even boasted that she would force Mary to serve in her household, or marry her to some varlet, a mere servant boy.[32] Now desperate to help Mary, the ambassador appealed to Agrippa to plead Mary's cause. Agrippa had been willing to write in Katherine's defence, but Charles had held up proceedings. The Emperor considered Agrippa to be a heretic, and accused him of impiety. Chapuys assured him of Katherine and Mary's gratitude, and in return, Louis de Praet, a well-regarded statesman and diplomat of Charles, would intercede on Agrippa's behalf with the Emperor. Chapuys then bombarded him with manuscripts of all relevant books, including those written by Bishop Fisher, Erasmus, Juan Luis Vives, and Cochlaeus. Chapuys tried everything; he reproached, entreated and cajoled his friend, quoting the bible often in his letters, as well as Aristotle, Homer, and Aristophanes.[33] It was another futile attempt.

By May 1533, it was clear the normally composed and pragmatic ambassador was now so emotionally attached to his cause that he was close to breaking point. This may explain his strange decision to journey down the Thames to Greenwich at midnight to visit Henry unannounced. It was a worrying sight to Thomas Boleyn, who met the agitated ambassador, no doubt fearing the worst.

Chapuys insisted that he be allowed to visit Henry, but Thomas instead took him to Norfolk to ascertain the purpose of the visit. Norfolk was firm that Henry was engaged at this late hour but that any communications would be relayed. The ambassador shook the duke off, insisting that his message was of such importance that he could only deliver it to the king, as he did not trust his words to be conveyed without being diluted.[34] Chapuys declared that Henry had never before refused him an audience, so why would he dispense with this custom now, especially without cause. The cogs no doubt whirred in Norfolk and Thomas's minds, thinking of the political meltdown that could arise if Chapuys was refused an audience with the king, and Thomas immediately went to Henry to determine if one could be granted.

Henry replied that he would see the ambassador immediately. One

can imagine the scene, the agitated ambassador being escorted by an anxious earl and duke. Both men kept pace with Chapuys, all the while trying to ascertain why he had come at such an hour, and trying to persuade him to visit on a different day at a better time. Given Chapuys' determination, it is surprising that their entreaties succeeded. Chapuys appears to have suddenly reconsidered, and as quickly as he had arrived, he left the palace.[35]

Days later the determined ambassador was received graciously enough by Henry, although he was no doubt wary of what Chapuys had to say given his dramatic attempt to speak with him previously. When Henry enquired after Charles, Chapuys replied that Charles was on his way back to Spain. Knowing the king wanted nothing more than to see Charles out of Italy and away from the Pope, Chapuys thus placated Henry, although stretching the truth somewhat. Chapuys then dispensed with pleasantries and cut to the quick. He told Henry bluntly that he was aware of attempts, both in convocation and in Parliament, to impugn Katherine's rights, and greatly injure her just cause. He explained to Henry that he could not acquit himself of his duty towards God, Charles, or Henry if he did not remonstrate against this behaviour towards Katherine. Being met with stony silence, Chapuys flattered Henry and entreated him to listen to what he had to say, 'for though he might disregard and despise the man, he would at least respect God'.[36]

Henry was not impressed, and snapped that God and his conscience were perfectly agreed on that point. Chapuys tried to steer the conversation once more, suggesting that Henry was setting a bad example in these troubled times, when heresy was so rife; even if his actions had little effect during his reign, they could affect his succession. The ambassador boldly stated that in all honesty such a case had never existed, at least in his memory or in any of his reading, of a prince divorcing his legitimate wife of twenty-five years to marry another woman. It was a dangerous conversation to be having, but Henry merely contradicted him, declaring that if the world really found his second marriage strange he found it even more so that the Pope had granted a dispensation for his first.[37]

Chapuys seems to have been prepared for such an answer, and rapidly listed off the top of his head five popes who had dispensed in similar cases, declaring that 'I was unwilling to dispute that matter with him, but that there was no doctor in his kingdom, who after such a debate would not confess that Pope Julius was authorized to dispense in the case'.[38]

Henry tried to diffuse the matter, telling the ambassador that his heirs were first and foremost his concern, especially a male heir which he was without at present, when Chapuys again pointed out that his

daughter could succeed, as Henry himself succeeded through the female line. It was Henry's turn to snap. 'Am I not a man like others?' he demanded three times of the surprised ambassador, before adding that he didn't have to reveal any of his actions to Chapuys, or give up royal secrets. Chapuys was immediately aware of the point: Henry was 'implying thereby that his beloved Lady is already in the family way'.[39]

Chapuys continued to argue in vain, his passion for the subject unabated, but Henry ignored the points made and recovered from his outburst, saying with the utmost confidence, 'Now I think I have given you full satisfaction on all points; what else do you want?'[40]

Chapuys at last deemed it wise to tread lightly, and assured Henry that Charles above all things desired Henry's welfare, profit, and honour, as well as the tranquillity of his kingdom. Henry was not appeased, so Chapuys confided that he had been so pleased to have been chosen to represent Charles to so great and magnanimous a king, hoping that, taking due cognisance of the affairs pending between the two crowns, everything should go on smoothly. After such provocative behaviour, Chapuys was now laying it on thick, but he seemed to be in luck; it wasn't a case of too little, too late.

The ambassador then admitted that he was now not confident in political affairs and the direction they had taken, and began to explain how Charles felt, but Henry interrupted; in Chapuys' words, Henry started 'frowning and moving his head to and fro', abruptly stating that, before the ambassador continued, he wanted to know whether these complaints actually came from Charles, or Chapuys himself. If they were, Henry warned, private remarks of the ambassador's, 'I shall know how to answer them.'[41]

Chapuys' response was scornful. Of course it was his personal complaint; how could he have already received a letter from Charles, which took a month to travel to England, instructing him to complain of the matters that had occurred only a week prior.[42] Henry said nothing. Chapuys then stirred the pot further by reproaching Henry for ignoring the papal excommunication. Henry's reaction was to boom, 'If you go on like that you will make me lose my temper.'

Then with mock innocence, Chapuys asked Henry how he had offended him, and assured the irate king that it had not been his intention at all. Henry seemed, for the moment, mollified; for the sake of both men's sanity the rest of the audience passed without any visible signs of ill humour. This account of an exhausting evening of mutual provocation between Henry and Chapuys offers us a further insight into their natures. Henry appears genial, quick to anger but easily soothed. Chapuys was prodigiously good at playing him, but Henry also kept the ambassador on his toes. However, despite the

ambassador's efforts, once again there was no real improvement in Katherine's treatment. Henry had other distractions.

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Arrangements for Anne's coronation planned for 1 June were in full swing; a barge was necessary to carry her up the Thames from Greenwich to the Tower the night before the coronation. There were any number of barges at her disposal, but Chapuys reports that Katherine's barge was commandeered and revamped for the occasion.

> This morning the Lady came from Greenwich to the Tower of London accompanied by several prelates and lords, and innumerable other people, as is customary with the queens of this country, and it must be observed that whatever sorrow and annoyance the King may have experienced, as the duke of Norfolk gave me to understand, at the seizure of the Queen's own barge, the Lady has unscrupulously made use of it at this coronation of hers, and appropriated it for her own use. May God permit that she may henceforwards be contented with possessing the barge, the jewels, and the husband of the Queen, without attempting also, as I have remarked in my preceding despatches, the life of the Queen and Princess.[43]

Chapuys does not expressly state that Anne ordered the barge, simply that it had been ordered and she had made use of it. Norfolk shared Chapuys' indignation, assuring the ambassador that he too grieved to hear that the queen's coat of arms had been removed, 'rather ignominiously torn off and cut to pieces'.

Anne's chamberlain was severely reprimanded for the violent act, as he could have easily used another barge. Both men knew that, when it came to Katherine, Anne could not do enough to remove her memory from the minds of the king, the court, and the realm itself. Norfolk attempted to placate Chapuys by praising Katherine and Mary, particularly Katherine's modesty, prudence, and forbearance. He felt that Katherine had shown remarkable patience 'not only during these last disagreeable differences, but likewise on former occasions, the King having been at all times very much given to amorous intrigues'.[44] Ironic then that to Chapuys, and perhaps the rest of Europe, Anne had always been just another amorous intrigue who had lingered.

The duke assured Chapuys that the king would never decrease the dowry which had been assigned to her in Prince Arthur's time – 24,000 ducats annually, which he thought more than sufficient for a dowager princess, provided she could reduce her household. In a rare moment of honesty, Norfolk appealed to the ambassador, declaring that, as Chapuys enjoyed so much influence over Katherine, he could try to persuade her to assent to Henry's divorce. Norfolk reasonably

and rationally stated that the matter had gone on long enough. Chapuys would not be drawn in by Norfolk's intimate tone and insisted it was out of the question. He told Charles: 'I had not with her the credit which [the Duke] supposed, and to speak frankly and without dissimulation, even if I had I would not for all the gold in the world undertake such a task without the express commands of Your Majesty.'[45]

We know this was not the case. Chapuys was one of the few people Katherine did listen to; his opinions and advice carried considerable weight, but Chapuys did not advise Katherine to surrender. Historians have criticised Chapuys' unremitting support of Katherine, and it is possible that he could have helped matters by advising her to acquiesce. He would eventually do just that, but Henry's rather poor treatment of Katherine gave Chapuys the confidence to keep fighting. However, we should also remember that Charles was maintaining pressure on Chapuys to challenge Henry in his name, allowing the ambassador to bear the brunt of the criticism while the Emperor watched from a distance, an impartial observer. It was the ambassadors who got their hands dirty in the name of their masters, whose cloaks were spared, kept away from the political mud.

Tensions continued to show between Anne and her father; the precariousness of Anne's position was taking its toll. Norfolk, trying to play both sides, was eager to convince Charles via Chapuys that neither he nor Thomas Boleyn were the originators or promoters of Anne's marriage. In fact, if Norfolk is to be believed, both he and Thomas had always opposed it, and they had tried to dissuade the king.[46]

Norfolk then recounted an incident between Anne and her father which showed Anne's fractious relationships. Anne had begun to loosen her gowns to accommodate her growing pregnancy, adding an extra panel. Her father remarked on it, suggesting that she display the pregnancy, thanking God for the state in which she found herself. In front of Norfolk, Suffolk and the treasurer of the household, Anne hotly retorted that she was in a better plight than he would have wished her to be. But we can glean from Chapuys' report that Anne must have been feeling unsupported by her family. She was at the zenith of her power, but her own family were still hedging their bets.[47]

Chapuys was not aware that Henry had launched a two-pronged attack. His councillors realised that the ambassador was Katherine's weak point, not vice versa. Norfolk and Gardiner threatened Katherine, telling her to dissuade her champion, if he valued his life, from presenting any of the papal briefs or letters to Henry.[48] If Chapuys persisted, Katherine was warned, even Henry himself could

not guarantee his safety or prevent an angry citizen from taking matters into their own hands and murdering the ambassador. It was an outrageous threat, and one that Chapuys ignored, as he knew well that Henry's marriage was unpopular, and he was at no risk of the wrath of Henry's subjects.

Prior to an audience on 7 May 1533 with Henry and the Privy Council, the ambassador had been taken aside by Thomas Cromwell. It was clear that some of the ambassador's letters were being intercepted, as Cromwell mentioned a recent written order from Charles. It instructed Chapuys to write to Henry informing him of the Emperor's intention to appeal Cranmer's appointment with the Pope.[49] Henry was outraged and had Cromwell warn Chapuys to abandon the issue. The ambassador did not respond and proceeded to his audience with Henry. Cromwell, it seemed, was trying to prepare him for the onslaught in Henry's chambers.

Thomas Boleyn confronted the ambassador during the meeting. He waved a letter in front of Chapuys from the ambassador to the Emperor, and demanded an explanation for its contents. How the men had obtained the letter is unclear, but as a large portion of it was in cipher they were naturally suspicious. Chapuys calmly summarised the letter; it discussed the papal briefs and the threat of excommunication.

When the unimpressed monarch moved to the second intercepted letter, regarding Charles appealing Cranmer's appointment, Thomas Boleyn jumped to his feet and threatened the ambassador.

> Hearing this the said Vulchier [Earl of Wiltshire] got up and said as a man who is at once vexed and surprised that the letter was a most strange one, and of such a nature that had it been written by a man of this kingdom, however great and distinguished, he would certainly have had his property confiscated and himself cast in prison for setting at defiance the statutes, laws, and ordinances lately passed in Parliament.[50]

Thomas further accused Chapuys of 'having two faces', an allusion to his serving Henry and Katherine at the same time, and being instrumental in the circulation of the papal briefs; in short he was possibly committing subversion. The bemused ambassador retorted that 'the men were like eels, crying out before they are skinned'.[51]

Thomas was not satisfied, and turned to the other men in the room to assist him, and Chapuys realised the gravity of the situation and that he must immediately conclude it. Chapuys coolly asked the council if they preferred him to undertake his defence in Latin or French. As French was not a language everyone present could speak, Latin was chosen.

The ambassador spoke fluently, eloquently and at length, assuring the men that the Emperor continued to love and respect Henry, and

that he loved Katherine as a mother, and Princess Mary as a sister. However, this had not swayed his opinion of Henry.

While this may have assuaged the English, Chapuys, who had been summoned to explain his actions, quickly turned the tables, by dredging up the canvassing of the universities.

> I shewed them what corrupt practices had been used to obtain the said votes, and that there was nevertheless a greater number of votes for the Queen than for their master, besides which all the prelates and doctors of Spain, Naples, and other countries had without one single exception, and without pressure or difficulty, voted for the Queen.[52]

Furthermore, the divorce could not be decided in England, especially before the Archbishop of Canterbury, whom Chapuys accused of being 'the most suspicious judge that could be chosen for a trial of that sort'.[53]

Chapuys ended his speech with a poignant reminder of the civil conflict known as the Wars of the Roses that engulfed England prior to Henry's reign. He castigated the men present, saying that it seemed as though they wished to sharpen the thorns of those very roses. There was no reply. Chapuys was then dismissed to await Henry's comments.[54]

This audience opened a breach between Chapuys, Norfolk and Thomas Boleyn. Norfolk and several councillors then invited Chapuys to dine with them, which was not out of character, but the now distrustful ambassador declined. He could not in good conscience behave as if matters were resolved. He felt particularly uneasy that dining with Norfolk would give the wrong impression, namely that he, and through him Charles, now accepted Henry's new marriage. Ambassadors were unreservedly aware that they were representatives of their masters, and any personal friendships or acquaintances had wider political ramifications. It was certainly possible that Chapuys had already been censured by Katherine or even Charles for engaging with the very men whom they viewed as Katherine's enemies. Certainly his actions suggest he had good cause to be circumspect.

However, Chapuys did not entirely rebuff Norfolk, and decided to visit the group once they had finished dining. In this informal and relaxed meeting, Norfolk again tried to convince Chapuys to give up his mission to interfere either with Cranmer's position or his judgement.[55] Perhaps emboldened by ale, and certainly by numbers, the men began to mock the ambassador and his devotion to Charles, and took little heed of Chapuys' reasonable arguments as to why he pursued the cause. Clearly things began to get heated between the councillors and Chapuys, but the ambassador wisely chose to spare Charles the details of the conversation. No doubt caustic remarks were

made about Charles, but Chapuys simply reported that 'things were said on both sides, with the detail of which I will not trouble Your Majesty, as one-tenth part of what was said on the occasion would be enough to cause you annoyance'.[56]

In the letter to Charles, Chapuys explained that he was tenacious in his objections to Henry and his councillors and his support of Katherine. He had no intention of interfering with Cranmer's judgement in the divorce. His intention had been to show them his dedication and resoluteness in order to shame them and thereby prevent any further mistreatment of Katherine. He added that, had he not stood up to Henry and Thomas Boleyn, he was certain the queen would have been even more poorly treated. He felt that by humouring Henry and his councillors by listening to their declarations, he had served Katherine and ensured a better outcome for her.[57]

Thomas Cromwell, now Henry's go-between with the ambassador, told Chapuys in no uncertain terms that Henry wanted Charles to keep out of his martial affairs.

In early May 1533 we see the first tendrils of a relationship between chief minister Cromwell and the ambassador that would endure despite the religious and political divide between them. Chapuys confided to Cromwell his concern that the relationship between Charles and Henry was crumbling, and urged Cromwell to keep the two monarchs allied.

However, he explained that Charles was distressed by the 'minor' things, such as the outright ill-treatment of the queen, the loss of her title, the enforced reduction of her expenses, retrenchment of her household servants, the vandalising of her crests on her royal barge, and from the gate of the Great Hall at Westminster (or Vuamaystre, as Chapuys wrote it phonetically).[58] An Imperial alliance was something Cromwell desperately wanted to uphold, and he worked hard to gain Chapuys' trust, speaking warmly of the past relationship between Charles and Henry. Probably stretching the truth, he said that he had not heard about Katherine's barge or other matters. When the discussion turned to Pope Clement, however, Cromwell was somewhat brusque; he declared that the Pope needed a good slap on the face.[59] Although shocked, Chapuys admired his honesty. When Cromwell admitted that Henry's love and infatuation for Anne was the only reason for his decision to divorce Katherine, Chapuys had finally found a man who didn't shy away from the truth or sugar-coat the facts. Nor did Cromwell care if the truth happened to be rather explosive. The conversation, though informal, was the first of many to come; the next occasion was at the end of the month, days before Anne's coronation.

On the morning of 25 May, Chapuys was engaged in his highest

priority of the day: reading and responding to Charles's letters. Cromwell unexpectedly called on the surprised ambassador in an attempt to persuade him to visit court. The ambassador declined, the memory of his recent audience with Henry perhaps fresh in his mind. Instead, Chapuys tried to get a rise out of Cromwell, saying that he believed the relationship between King Francis and Charles was once more blossoming, while implying that Henry's and Charles's friendship was withering.[60] Chapuys was stretching the truth, as he personally had little time for Francis, and such an alliance was hardly desirable, but he was on a fishing expedition, trying to learn Cromwell's views on international relations. Cromwell's reaction, Chapuys reported with grim satisfaction, was less than pleased. '[Cromwell], without shewing any particular joy at the news imparted to him left my room declaring to me before quitting that his intentions were, as he assured me, to do everything in his power to prevent any further offences being done against Your Majesty.'[61]

The meeting ended, and the ambassador had the satisfaction of bidding adieu to an irate Cromwell.

Yet, despite the calm facade Chapuys showed Henry and his court, the reality was that he was constantly accosted by people from court who complained to him about the king. No longer did Chapuys gloat about Henry's unpopularity; in fact he seemed distressed by the situation, and the pressure on him to provide a solution.

> Every day I am visited by people of quality, who break my head with speeches and writings, giving me to understand that King Richard, the last of his name, was never so much hated by his subjects as this present King is, and yet that he was dethroned by two or three thousand Frenchmen under the leadership of a prince hardly known in this country.[62]

After a short divorce hearing on 23 May 1533, Thomas Cranmer, now invested as Archbishop of Canterbury, declared that Henry was, at last, divorced from his first wife. For Henry and Anne, it was official. Chapuys reported the hearing had been held not in London as the first was held at Blackfriars years prior, but at Dunstable Priory in Bedfordshire. He remarked that Henry was anxious to avoid public involvement: 'A solitary place has been chosen for secrecy, as they fear that if the affair was managed [in London], the people would not refrain from speaking and perhaps rioting.'[63]

Yet a riot probably would have suited the ambassador, as in his more heated moments he continued to encourage Charles to declare war on England. The ambassador knew however that this was almost impossible. Charles told him in no uncertain terms that he would not tolerate any more suggestions of invasion, which the ambassador duly acknowledged.[64] He noted in his despatch in late May that Charles

himself could judge whether Chapuys had acted in accordance with Charles's orders of 1529, namely that he was not to make matters worse, not to threaten war, nor in any way imply that there might be a rupture in the friendship and good intelligence between the two countries.

However, war was clearly on everybody's minds, and Henry had to take steps to ensure such rumours were scotched. Chapuys had been informed of a recent exchange between Henry's silversmith and jeweller (who was also that of Anne) and one of his customers, a very worthy and creditable man, related it to him:

> That the King was exceedingly angry at some English merchants having gone to Flanders to bring back their merchandise, for that, he said, was equivalent to prognosticating and announcing war, and instilling suspicion and jealousy into the minds of the people much before there was any occasion and before the princes had thought of it themselves. [65]

One wonders if, following such a declaration, Cromwell quickly retrieved his treasures from the Tower.

The spring of 1533 brought the arrival of Jean Dinteville as the French ambassador. His task was to untangle foreign relations now that Henry had helped himself to his second wife before awaiting the papal go-ahead to divorce his first. Dinteville and his good friend George de Selve, Bishop of Lavaur, would, in May 1533, become the subjects of a portrait by Hans Holbein the Younger, which today stands in the National Portrait Gallery in London. It remains one of the most famous paintings of the Tudor period, known as *The Ambassadors*.[66] The portrait is rich with symbolism of the reformist leanings of both men, not in the least with the hymn book on the bottom shelf between the two men and in front of the lute, which is opened to a page featuring a translation of a hymn by Martin Luther. Both men were sent to England to keep an eye on the country during this tumultuous period. France's particular concern was that the legitimacy of Anne's marriage to Henry be in no doubt. However, through Dinteville's correspondence, we learn that they were exceedingly apprehensive about the situation in England. Chapuys was not the only ambassador who had serious reservations about the state of affairs.[67]

May and June of 1533 were primarily concerned with Anne's impending coronation. However, neither her uncle Norfolk nor brother George would be there to witness Anne's moment of glory. Instead, George was to embark on his third embassy with his uncle, to witness a meeting between Francis and the Pope and represent Henry.[68] During this particular mission George was given grim news: the Pope had finally acted on his threat and officially excommunicated

the king.[69] George would not reach England with the news until after the coronation; for now, Henry and Anne enjoyed their triumph.

Royal Rivals

> *It is true that in an indirect manner they have occasionally hinted at what they call Your Majesty's ingratitude and ill-behaviour towards them, and I should certainly have replied, using the very same weapons, had I not thought it better to dissemble.*
>
> Chapuys, 1533

It had been six years since Henry had first had doubts about his first marriage, and five years since the divorce proceedings began. In that time Henry had lost friends, alliances had been forged and broken, embassies had come and gone, and an irrevocable breach had opened between England and Rome. However, all this ceased to matter for the days of Anne's coronation celebrations.

For four days Henry and his court went wild. On 30 May Anne made her progression on the Thames from Greenwich Palace to the Tower of London, where she was greeted by her husband to the roaring fire of 1,000 guns. The next morning she at last made her way from the Tower to Westminster Abbey, dressed in coronation robes of ermine-trimmed purple velvet, and wearing a coronet of gold. For the next two days Henry celebrated with jousts, feasts and celebrations along the Thames. It had been an incredibly lavish affair; the Milanese ambassador predicted that it cost the city of London around 200,000 ducats. The French embassy, whom the Boleyns favoured, had pride of place in the procession, while the Imperial embassy was ignored. Chapuys' description of the four days of festivities, including the coronation, have often been dismissed on the grounds that he avoided them. Yet the evidence suggests that he was present much of the time. Surely no ambassador could have resisted witnessing the spectacle, or would have risked their master's wrath with second-hand information of such an important event. In fact, in a letter to de Granvelle he describes Anne's progress from Greenwich to the Tower, and one of the evenings during the festivities on the Thames. Chapuys describes the coronation as 'altogether a cold, poor, and most unpleasing sight to the great regret, annoyance, and disappointment not only of the common people but likewise of all the rest'. He was possibly playing down the spectacle for Charles's sake, but he appears to have enjoyed some elements of the festivities, as he also reports that he was lavishly entertained at a banquet held on the German ambassador's barge where, he wrote to de Granvelle, they drank a toast to the Emperor as the guns of the Tower fired.[1] Thus Chapuys was actively participating in events.[2]

The ambassador is not the only observer to leave us with a negative account of the coronation; indeed, some critical accounts have been erroneously attributed to Chapuys. One in particular that

has shaped our view of Anne's appearance, and contributed to the myth that she was deformed, is a letter in the archives in Brussels.

It has often been attributed to Chapuys but its handwriting and style are entirely different from his and those of his secretaries. It says:

> The crown became her [Anne] very ill, and a wart disfigured her very much. She wore a violet velvet mantle, with a high ruff of gold thread and pearls, which concealed a swelling she has, resembling goître.[3]

This anonymous letter also claims that the French embassy were insulted in the streets as they passed, being called 'whoreson', 'knave' and 'French dog'.[4]

The letter is obviously written by someone vehemently opposed to Anne and the French, but it was not Chapuys.

Whatever the conflicting views of the coronation, this was Anne's ultimate triumph; now she would have to deliver on her promise of a son and secure her reign.

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Katherine was grief-stricken at the news of the coronation, and stubbornly refused to be called anything other than queen. Chapuys was quick to explain her actions, telling Charles that it was not out of arrogance or desire of vain glory that she insisted on the title. In fact, he confided, she would take greater glory in being called the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain than the greatest queen in the world, if she knew that she really had no claim to that title.[5] Perhaps deep down the ambassador was painfully aware of how Katherine's behaviour looked, but now was not the time to be publicly divided. He also refrained from making the point in his despatch that, had Charles taken action months before, it was entirely possible that matters would not have reached this state – a fact that no doubt played on the ambassador's mind.

The marriage and coronation had, however, spurred Charles into action, or at least his version of action. His council regrouped and issued the following bulletin:

> the King having lived in undisputed marriage with the Queen for about 18 years, and having by her the Princess, who ought to succeed him, procured six years ago a commission from the Pope to cardinals Campeggio and York to proceed to a divorce, but the Queen appealed to Rome. The King, however, persisted in the case being tried out of Italy, in some place where he could appear in person. This point was debated, and finally the Consistory determined that the King's excusator could not be admitted without a mandate. The Emperor has continually commended the matter to the Pope, by ambassadors and letters, and at their interview at Bologna. Briefs have been obtained to prevent the

King from marrying, but he has nevertheless done so, and has forbidden Katharine to be called Queen.[6]

Charles proposed several courses of action which are so ineffectual as to be comical:

1. The prosecution of justice.
2. Force.
3. Force, together with the said justice.

The suggestions were more or less what Chapuys had recommended to Charles several months earlier but were now too late. Henry was hardly likely to obey any demands, with the impending birth of an heir. Charles's council agreed, adding that war was out of the question, especially as Henry had not acted violently against Katherine or Charles. Even if war were an option, they would have to wait for the Pope to pass sentence on the divorce. With such a council as this on her side, it is hardly surprising that Katherine relied so heavily on Chapuys. Despite Chapuys' attempts to dampen Charles's enthusiasm for badgering Henry to leave Anne, he was of course obliged to carry out his master's wishes. Henry and his councillors had told him repeatedly in 1533 that the idea was impossible. Henry would, however, be generous and honourable if Katherine accepted the situation. If she did not, then Henry would punish her through Mary, which was now the ambassador's greatest concern. The council made it perfectly clear that no further discussion would be tolerated.

Charles also considered taking Katherine out of England but was strongly urged against it; the council suggested that Henry might later feel remorse for leaving Katherine if he tired of Anne or began to fear his subjects. Such declarations show the council was very much in the dark when it came to English politics; they demonstrate how vital Chapuys was to Charles as an informant, and how Charles held Chapuys' opinion above that of his own council in such matters.

Still, the Emperor appeared to have renewed vigour regarding the divorce. Prior to Anne's coronation, Miguel Mai, Charles's Imperial proctor in Rome, was replaced by Rodrigo Davalos, a man who would not shy away from direct and forceful language with the Pope. Davalos's intent was to tell Clement, in no uncertain terms, that Charles was deeply displeased and offended by Clement's inaction. On the Emperor's orders, Davalos accompanied Don Fernando de Sylva, the Count of Cifuentes, and the Cardinal of Jaen, to speak directly with Clement. The Pope in turn solemnly assured the men that he would make a decision as soon as possible. Davalos wrote to Charles and Chapuys that he was sceptical of Clement's promise, which Chapuys mirrored in his despatch to the Emperor, mordaciously

adding that, if any verdict were to be given, it would be helpful if it arrived *before* Anne gave birth.[7]

Charles also sought Chapuys' advice about an alternative measure: enlisting Francis I to persuade Henry to leave Anne. Francis's first wife, Claude, whom Anne once served, had died almost a decade before, and his second wife, Eleanor of Austria, was Charles's sister and Katherine's niece. Could Eleanor perhaps be persuaded by her brother to influence her husband? Charles's ambassadors in France assured him that Francis had expressed great displeasure at Henry's marriage to 'the concubine' and had endeavoured to dissuade him from it.[8] Emboldened by this report, Charles wrote to his brother-in-law, Francis. However, Chapuys, when asked his opinion, was more realistic. He frankly advised Charles not to expect anything from Francis, reminding the Emperor that Anne and the French king were on very good terms and she had shown partiality to France; he doubted that Francis would risk damaging this relationship. The very fact that Anne had just received a gift from the French king of 'a handsome and richly decorated litter with three mules and a harness' suggested Charles was fighting a losing battle.[9]

Charles had instructed Davalos to 'consult on the best means of forcing the king of England to put away his concubine, and, if possible, getting his Holiness to deprive him of his kingdom'.[10] Charles rightfully feared that Anne and Henry would care very little if the Pope issued such an edict, even if Clement declared their issue to be illegitimate. Henry had come too far now to cower before the Pope, especially if Anne gave him a son. Charles's passion for the issue echoes Chapuys' feelings months prior, but psychologically Chapuys had moved on, determined to salvage what he could to improve the terms of a settlement for Katherine and Mary. His blunt, unenthusiastic and even slightly bewildered responses to Charles show us just how far behind the Emperor truly was.

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The powerful position held by Anne and her family helped maintain diplomatic ties to France, and Chapuys now felt more than ever that he must tread with absolute caution. He was careful not to petition to see Katherine, whose fury and grief at the coronation were extreme. Upon receiving instructions and letters from Charles to Katherine, Chapuys chose not to visit her, and instead translated the letters in cipher into Spanish, Latin and French. The ambassador feared that, if he did ask to see Katherine, he would 'lose the little credit I seem to enjoy just now with them'.[11] Chapuys was also concerned about being forced to demand that Katherine submit to Cranmer's decision regarding her divorce, so removing himself from a potentially unpleasant situation was prudent.

Chapuys seems to have counselled Katherine to do nothing for the time being, despite her anger at Anne's coronation, and to wait for the papal judgement before taking any action. Katherine preferred to battle Henry and Anne head on, but she took the ambassador's advice and said nothing. Perhaps Katherine still feared the removal of the ambassador, which would explain her numerous letters to Charles and Chapuys commending the ambassador as 'her only refuge for the direction of her affairs'.[12]

Charles's letter to his aunt spoke of his continued efforts to force Clement to give a verdict. This pleased the ambassador, as did Charles's copy of his instructions to Davalos for his meeting with Clement. The ambassador effusively praised Charles, declaring,

> The instructions for Your Majesty's ambassadors at Rome being, as I said above, so beautifully drawn up, I might be excused adding any suggestions of my own, and thus making parade of my ignorance; yet in order the better to obey Your Majesty's commands, which is the thing in this world I most desire.[13]

However, the ambassador did tactfully admit that, as perfect as Charles's instructions were, he had written to Davalos and Cifuentes, supplying a few suggestions. If Francis did, by some miracle, declare for Katherine, Chapuys suggested that, along with the papal sentence when it finally arrived, Charles's other sister, Mary of Hungary, now Governor of the Netherlands, should send her own ambassadors to give weight to the decree.[14]

Henry had a penchant for cajoling Chapuys into making Katherine see reason. In late June the ambassador was called before the Privy Council. He faced a larger group of men than usual, which was no doubt designed to intimidate him. However, they included Cromwell, Cranmer, Gardiner et al. – men with whom he had sparred before and knew well.

They announced that Henry had always found in the Imperial ambassador 'a very strong, praiseworthy, and complete inclination towards the maintenance of peace and friendship between the Empire and England, and also towards the transaction of business amicably'.[15]

Henry was confident that Chapuys was 'a prudent, discreet, and experienced councillor' and, as such, he must surely understand that Henry had now married a legitimate wife, crowned her queen, and as there could only be one queen in the realm Katherine must relinquish the title. Henry would be guided by Chapuys on how to treat Katherine from now on, especially regarding the allowance he gave her.

The ambassador appeared to be unmoved, thanking the king for his good opinion. His next words would have no doubt caused

irritation among the council: they, Chapuys reasoned, must know that Henry's marriage and Cranmer's sentence had no effect on Katherine's case. Taking advantage of the situation and their undivided attention, he felt he should 'make a slight remark or two'.

As Henry had acknowledged that Katherine had been once his legitimate wife and queen, thus Mary was a legitimate child, there was no reason for Katherine to relinquish the title. He then tried a different tactic, not one which Katherine would have approved of, appealing to their male sensibilities. Women in general, he stated, were fond and proud of such titles, and 'she ought to retain it as a consolation and comfort in her misfortunes, were it for no other reason than to preserve the rank she once had'.[16]

Chapuys was even able to use Henry's own sister, Mary, as an example. It was well known that Mary, who had been married to King Francis's father for mere months, still insisted on being called Queen of France, despite the fact that she had remarried.[17] It was an argument the men could not dispute, and the ambassador reminded the council that Henry had first declared that his divorce sprung from a crisis of conscience. Once more he used Henry's words as a weapon; Henry had once declared that he would not for anything in this world have taken another wife. If Henry truly cared for Katherine, which such a scruple indicated, then he could not in good conscience take away her title, or do anything to make her life uncomfortable. Surely Henry was not the sort of man to punish his ex-wife. 'The Queen did not build towers, castles, or fortresses with it [her allowance], or raise armies against him; the whole was spent paying the gentlemen of her household and in providing marriage portions for her gentlewomen, a custom which the King himself was bound to observe.'[18]

When asked how Katherine should be treated Chapuys used an historical analogy: 'Indeed one might answer such a question as the King had asked, in the words of King Porus of India to Alexander the Great, when he became his prisoner: "Basilice siue regaliter", which was as much as he could ask from a prince.'[19]

The men could only praise Chapuys' zeal for peace.

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Mary's welfare was becoming a greater issue for the ambassador, as he had not seen her for some months. Mary had stayed for almost a year in a house owned by Cranmer, before Henry moved her yet again to an estate 40 miles from London. Mary had recently been ill, and the ambassador was quick to commend Henry for granting his daughter permission to have her mother's personal physician and apothecary visit her. When Henry was kind to his first wife and daughter, the ambassador dutifully reported it, yet only the ambassador's negative reports regarding Henry and his first family remain at the forefront of

historical narratives. This adds to our misconception that Chapuys constantly attempted to exaggerate and stir up trouble. Chapuys was also pleased that Henry had relented somewhat by allowing mother and daughter to exchange messages; the ambassador even suspected that Katherine could have visited Mary if she had chosen to. The time for fighting Henry over the divorce had passed; Chapuys' concern now was that Mary not be discarded and forgotten once Anne's child was born.

June had been a trying month for Chapuys, both politically and financially, and the ambassador concluded a despatch to Charles with the plea:

> I feel ashamed to beg for further reward, and yet Your Majesty's clemency and magnanimity, as well as my wish to have more power and ability to serve you – which is the constant aim of my wishes – emboldens and almost compels me to beg Your Majesty to bear me in mind in the next distribution of ecclesiastical benefices.[20]

Charles granted him the bishopric of Malaga, which would have undoubtedly added to his coffers. Not that Chapuys was the only ambassador underpaid in Charles's service; we rarely hear of the plight of the ambassadors and proctors in Rome, but their letter to the Emperor in the same week as Chapuys' shows that Charles grossly underpaid his embassies: 'The Queen's [Katherine's] lawyers and proctors have not received a farthing for several months. I beg leave to inform Your Lordship of it, because on such occasions as this it will not do to neglect the Emperor's faithful servants.'[21]

Count Cifuentes and Davalos reported a peculiar piece of news, which does not appear in the Imperial ambassador's June despatches: Clement had asked whether Charles would consent to Mary being married off to Norfolk. It was a proposal hastily beaten down by a perplexed Charles, and perhaps shows just how out of touch Clement was with the political issues surrounding him.

Pope Clement and King Francis had been in peace negotiations since Francis's meeting with Henry in 1532 in Calais, at which Francis promised to persuade Clement to support Henry's case. Clement and Francis were now due to meet in late October 1533 in Marseille. Charles was naturally less than impressed that such preference was being shown to Francis, but, despite Clement having crowned him Holy Roman Emperor, the sack of Rome by Charles's army in 1527 remained a stain on their friendship. The Imperial ambassadors in Rome wrote to Chapuys that, despite their attempts to dissuade him, Clement was determined to travel to Marseille for the meeting.

Norfolk was still in France, and would no doubt be present for such a conference. With this in mind, the ambassador wrote to Cifuentes,

declaring that Clement 'ought not to suffer the duke of Norfolk, or any of his suite, to make part of the assembly'.[22]

If the grizzled duke did show signs of attending, Cifuentes was to prevent it at all costs. Henry may have had plans for Francis to manipulate Clement, but Chapuys' despatch shows that it was Francis whom the Pope planned to manipulate. 'If the Pope wishes to gain over the king of France to his opinion, and make an auxiliary of him for this English affair, he might easily represent that this king by his new marriage has infringed, as is manifest, all the treaties existing between them.'[23]

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Back in England, Anne and Henry were preparing for the birth. It seemed that Anne was determined to have as many of Katherine's possessions as she could, not necessarily out of spite, but perhaps through a desire to strengthen her legitimacy. She decided that her child, when born, should be christened in the 'royal gown'. Such a thing did not exist: the cloth referred to had been brought from Spain when Katherine first arrived in England, and it had been used for Mary's christening. Anne was adamant that her child should be christened in the same cloth. Katherine, as Chapuys predicted, was livid and refused to acquiesce, and the ambassador admitted that he had no idea how the issue would resolve itself. He reported that Katherine's answer was to this effect: 'God forbid that I should ever be so badly advised as to give help, assistance, or favour, directly or indirectly, in a case so horrible and abominable as this.'[24]

The gown was not Anne's only cause for irritation; she now complained about the German merchants, or 'easterlings', the very same merchants who had entertained Chapuys so handsomely on their barge at Anne's coronation. The merchants apparently placed a flag of the Imperial eagle over the arms of England, at which she now took offence.[25] Anne was already on the defensive, perceiving threats all around her. Katherine had always been a problem, but Mary was quickly becoming a threat as she grew older, and the princess's popularity caused Anne great anxiety. When Mary passed through villages, Chapuys wrote, people 'rejoiced as if God Almighty had come down from Heaven; at which the Lady has been very much offended, and intends giving the inhabitants of these districts a proof of her resentment'.[26] Chapuys was becoming bolder in his reports about Anne, speaking of her 'wickedness and perversity'. His harsh language towards her usually peaks with each action taken against Katherine, or perceived threat to Mary; but he was not yet calling her the 'concubine'.

In July, Katherine was forced to move once more, this time to an estate owned by the Bishop of Lincoln. Her sad departure

demonstrated to the people how neglected and mistreated she was. In a possibly exaggerated account (Chapuys was not an eye-witness) he wrote to Charles that

> the people of the neighbourhood collected to witness her departure, and shew her all possible honour and respect. Incredible are the marks of affection she received on the road; though it has been expressly forbidden to call her queen, yet the people on her passage failed not to give her that title, filling the air with their acclamations, wishing her joy, comfort, and all manner of prosperity, as well as mishap to her enemies, begging her with tears in their eyes to accept their services and make use of them, since they were ready to die for her sake.[27]

Such reports were a serious irritation to Henry and Anne.

The ambassador continued urging Henry to give Katherine better treatment and allow her to see her daughter. Henry, however, wanted no reminder of his first wife and child while he was anxiously waiting for Anne to give birth. He simply sent Cromwell, now Chancellor of the Exchequer, to visit Chapuys, with the message that it was not his fault that Katherine hadn't received the treatment she had hoped for. As king he had every right to reduce her household and, as Cromwell pointed out, she was no longer queen and her household needed to reflect the demotion. Cromwell handled the ambassador with much greater success than Norfolk had, and Chapuys was anxious to keep Henry's new man on side. The relationship was mutually beneficial.

Cromwell stressed to the ambassador that Katherine's treatment stemmed not from any malice towards her but out of an economic pragmatism. He added that Henry held nothing but deep respect for her birth, and that of her nephew. It was the right note for Cromwell to hit with the ambassador, who was slightly mollified and quickly thanked Henry through the chancellor for his humanity and courtesy; Chapuys told Cromwell that it confidently signalled the king's wish to maintain peace. Katherine no doubt would have wanted Chapuys to fight Cromwell on this point, but the ambassador deemed it more prudent to pick his battles. Anne in power meant a natural leaning towards France, and Chapuys was anxious not to alienate the court more than he had to. It is a prime example of the ambassador's talent for looking at the big picture.

Henry was ready to reward Chapuys for being agreeable: through Cromwell he offered Chapuys a horse of 'the finest and best breed in all England', and extended an invitation to hunt in any of the royal parks, in which Henry would join him so they could converse often. Chapuys had no intention of accepting such a gift, as it could be easily misconstrued. Cromwell knew this, and assured Chapuys – probably with a knowing look – that he had told the king the ambassador could

not accept such a gift. Chapuys made his excuses, but in a gesture of goodwill he proposed that, instead of a horse, he 'would willingly spend one whole day with him [Henry] in hunting, wherever he pleased'.

Several days prior, Chapuys had received a haunch of venison, which he developed a liking for, and asked that Cromwell thank Henry on his behalf. Cromwell jested that 'if the venison was good as I imagine, the King's intention, I assure you, is still better, and therefore the meal must have tasted delicious to you'.[28]

Chapuys wrote to Charles that, as Cromwell took his leave, he earnestly begged the chancellor to remember that 'no friendship and alliance was as advantageous for this kingdom of England as that of Your Majesty'.[29] Chapuys added something of a warning: when Cardinal Wolsey had served Charles loyally, he had prospered, but the moment he 'turned coat everything had gone wrong with him'.[30] Chapuys was conveniently forgetting how he was almost ensnared in the unsuccessful rapprochement with the cardinal.

We should note two important points about this meeting between the two men. Firstly, the common perception that Chapuys was so blinded by Katherine's cause that he risked open war with Henry is clearly an exaggeration. Chapuys feared a breach between Charles and Henry more than anything else, and even Katherine's plight had to come second to such a concern. Secondly, this interview marks the point in which Chapuys began to see Cromwell as a friend and ally, someone who fascinated him and whom he was determined to keep on side. However, he was careful not to reveal too much too soon, choosing to gain Cromwell's trust slowly. Cromwell, it seemed, had exactly the same idea regarding the ambassador.

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Domestic affairs kept Henry diverted throughout the August of 1533. The Scots continued their raids on the English border, and were averse to Henry's religious drift away from Rome. Charles was content that the Scots would at least deter Henry from hostile action towards his empire, specifically any invasion of the Netherlands. Considering how much had been spent on Anne's coronation, it is unlikely that Henry had the finances needed for such a venture. Chapuys spoke with the French ambassador, and was pleased to discover that the Scots were an impressive military force. The French ambassador confided that he had never seen such formidable fighters, though Chapuys concluded that this report could be exaggerated.[31]

However, when the Scottish ambassador returned to England from France, Chapuys noted that he was received with the utmost respect by a court eager to keep peace at all costs.[32] Chapuys showed little interest in developing a relationship with the Scottish ambassador

personally, and was merely hopeful that James IV would keep Henry occupied and cause more trouble.[33]

George Boleyn hastily arrived back in England with the unwelcome task of informing Henry that he had been excommunicated. Chapuys did not immediately learn the reason for George's return, although he deduced that he had brought news that was unfavourable to Henry. Chapuys noted that, whatever the news was, it was kept from Anne, perhaps to prevent unnecessary distress. Henry took the news considerably well and went hunting, preferring solitude to gather his thoughts. George, in contrast, was to return immediately to Lyon where his uncle awaited him.[34]

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In early August the sweating sickness once again plagued London. Henry left the capital, thwarting several ambassadors desiring an audience. Most of the other ambassadors decided to sit out Henry's absence, but Chapuys took the initiative and followed Henry's councillors, including Cromwell, to 'an estate belonging to the King, in the midst of a park, 20 miles from this city'.[35] It proved to be good move; Chapuys was lavishly wined and dined, and participated in one of Henry's beloved hunts. The ambassador was pleased with his reception, although Henry declined an audience and instead hosted him during their hunt. Despite the pleasures of hunting and feasting, Chapuys would not be deterred from his desire for a formal audience with the king once they returned to court. This was again thwarted by Norfolk's hasty return from France with panicked messages for Henry. Henry and his councillors, upon hearing Norfolk's news, closed ranks, and Chapuys was told only that he was not to leave London. He was already writing frequently about Cromwell, noting that the two men had found many occasions to speak privately. The ambassador endeavoured to flatter Cromwell, confiding that he thought him a more able and talented man than his past master, Cardinal Wolsey. Cromwell had been intensely loyal to Wolsey, and it was perhaps the wrong note for Chapuys to strike, but Cromwell accepted the comment graciously. Cromwell then revealed Norfolk's latest news; Clement had at last pronounced sentence on the divorce in favour of Katherine. Chapuys commented that it was hardly likely that Clement would have favoured a divorce.

Charles had lost none of his enthusiasm for badgering Henry into taking his aunt back. His letters to Chapuys make it clear that the issue was still paramount, and that the ambassador had no choice but to pursue the cause. Despite his disillusionment, Chapuys needled Cromwell, declaring that Henry, being so reasonable, virtuous, and humane a prince, would surely not persist in his marriage to Anne. It was a last-ditch effort; Chapuys himself had little hope of it

succeeding, but he was anxious to get Charles off his back. He knew that Cromwell, as a newcomer, had not been as deeply involved in the divorce issue as other councillors, and therefore might be impartial. If Cromwell tried and failed to persuade the king, Charles could not complain that Chapuys hadn't explored every avenue.

Cromwell gave no indication of his true feelings – being, like Chapuys, a master of dissimulation – but he thanked Chapuys warmly, only adding that Henry above all else wished to maintain a friendship with Charles. In a curious aside, Chapuys also mentioned to Charles that Cromwell did not use 'the usual language respecting Your Majesty and the Queen, nor did he advise, as at other times, that you should both yield and consent to the King's marriage'.[36] There is no direct indication that Cromwell was hinting at difficulties in the royal marriage, but Chapuys thought, either from some gesture of Cromwell's or in a case of wishful thinking, that Henry was already repenting how far his affair with Anne had taken him. Cromwell was to depart London on business for several days, but assured the ambassador that when he returned the two men would hunt together. The influx of messages from Rome and France threatened to delay such a meeting. Nevertheless, Chapuys told Charles that he was determined to 'set the net, and see if I cannot catch him; I will nevertheless keep a good look-out ahead and risk nothing without being well prepared, knowing, as I do, that in these matters one cannot be too cautious'.[37] In the case of Cromwell and Chapuys, however, it is never truly clear who was trying to ensnare whom.

Throughout the latter half of 1533 there was a propagandist attack on the Catholic Church; Chapuys identified Henry and Cranmer as the figureheads. In a despatch to de Granvelle, the ambassador lamented that the papal edict forbidding Henry from marrying until a sentence had been passed on the divorce had done more harm than good; it had fuelled Henry's anger with Clement and the papacy, which had, in the king's opinion, utterly let him down by allowing him to marry Katherine in the first place. Domestic matters were still causing Henry concern, and the ambassador reported that the king was eager to maintain peace with Scotland. The ambassador was sceptical that peace could be truly agreed, rather disparagingly remarking that the Scots were somewhat lawless.[38]

Anne and Henry's main concern was the gender of their child. A stream of physicians and astrologers had assured the couple that the child would be a boy, and Henry, desperately wanting to believe them, was preparing festivities for the birth. Horses were being imported from Flanders for celebratory jousts, and Henry had given Anne a bed that was part of a French ransom.

However, was all well between the royals? Historians have become

fixated with discovering the exact moment the marriage fell apart, and Chapuys is one of our most important sources for determining this. However, his version of events – Henry's wandering eye, their violent quarrels and Henry's growing dissatisfaction with his marriage – is not particularly dramatic. The ambassador reported that there had been tension in previous weeks:

> It appears that she being sometime ago very jealous of the King, and not without legitimate cause, made use of certain words which the King very much disliked, telling her that she must shut her eyes and endure as those who were better than herself had done, and that she ought to know that he could at any time lower her as much as he had raised her.[39]

The couple had gone for several days without speaking to one another. Nevertheless, although Katherine's supporters took it as a sign that Henry tired of Anne and would soon recall Katherine, Chapuys dismissed it a lover's quarrel.[40] Anne and Henry were undoubtedly anxious about the impending birth, as so much rested on whether it was a son.

In late August, days before Anne was due to give birth, a curious rumour emerged that Henry was already losing his passion for her. The ambassador reported that he had heard Henry was beginning to regret the marriage, which had cost England its Imperial alliances and relationship with the papacy. However, Chapuys, who kept a sharp eye on Henry and his council, put little store in the rumour. He pointed out that it was unlikely to be the case, especially after conferences with his council, in which Henry had been persuaded that, out of himself and Clement, he was the injured party; that the papal sentence was of little importance, and that there were many who would defend Henry's position. This bolstered Henry's belief that he had been betrayed by the Pope. Chapuys knew Henry well enough by now to recognise a monarch in need of a confidence boost. He noted that a letter from Norfolk, still occupied in France, assuring Henry that he was in the right 'had been so much to the King's taste that he keeps repeating it at all hours of the day to the gentlemen of his chamber'.[41]

The letter coincided with a renewed vigour to rearrange Katherine's household, giving Katherine a not ungenerous allowance: 30,000 crowns a year for her maintenance, out of which 12,000 would be used to pay the ladies of her chamber. The rest would be administered by a royal deputy 'who will attend to the table and pay the servants, wages etc'.[42] Katherine, however, was not at all satisfied, writing to the ambassador that she 'would rather die or go out begging for a charity than consent to it, even if they offered her seven millions of ducats every year'.

Chapuys obviously felt that, with the impending birth of what Henry hoped would be a son, Katherine should capitulate and accept the terms offered.

> I was of opinion that if she could not attain her object, rather than proceed to the extremities of which she spoke, she had better tacitly accept the terms offered to her. I will do my best to persuade the Queen to this course as more convenient and at the same time more comfortable with Your Majesty's wishes and instructions.[43]

Anne went into labour on 7 September – and delivered a girl. After five years of waiting to be married and countless personal, religious and political sacrifices, it was an anticlimax. Chapuys was naturally relieved that the marriage had only produced a girl, and his letters are full of barely contained amusement. Chapuys may not be exaggerating when he reported that Anne was upset and Henry angry that the child was a girl. So too no doubt were the physicians, astrologers and doctors who had so confidently predicted a prince. Regardless of the brave face the couple put on, a daughter did nothing to secure Anne as queen, and the ambassador reported that those who had confidently predicted a boy (including the couple themselves) were 'ashamed'.[44]

We have seen a trend in recent decades to downplay Henry's displeasure, that he was disappointed but exceedingly proud of his new daughter, but I would question whether our own knowledge of Elizabeth I's subsequent reign has clouded the issue, an example of viewing the sixteenth century from our own point of view. Having a second girl was a blow to the couple and especially to Henry, who trusted that God would smile on his new marriage and surely grant his wish for a male heir.

Religion had a real and genuine impact on people's lives in the sixteenth century, and the ambassador shared in the general piety of his time. Thus he was not necessarily being spiteful when he concluded that God must have abandoned Henry 'and left him a prey to his own misfortune, and to his obstinate blindness, that he may be punished and completely ruined'.[45] Henry himself had already grappled with his conscience and believed that God had punished him in his first marriage by giving him only a daughter. We can imagine that he might now fear that God had not smiled on his second marriage.

The plans for celebrations of a prince were drastically scaled down, and Chapuys reported that 'the new-born is to be christened at Greynuich. The godmothers will be the mother-in-law to the Duke of Norfolk and the Marchioness of Exeter; the archbishop of Canterbury to hold the child at the font, and the bishop of London to christen

her.'[46]

A rumour, perhaps odd in retrospect, had been circulating around court that Anne was superstitious, and had considered naming her child Mary, after the princess, to legitimise her daughter. Chapuys seems unsure if the rumour regards the name or the title, and wrote, 'She is to be called Mary as the Princess [is]: which title, as I have been informed from various quarters, will be taken away from its true and legitimate owner, and given to this spurious daughter of the King. If so we shall soon hear.'[47]

There is no indication that the couple intended any such thing, but the ambassador felt it worth noting, and addressed the issue in his next despatch, confirming that there was no truth to it, and that the child was called Elizabeth. We assume that Chapuys attended the christening, which he reported was a dull, subdued affair. When Chapuys visited Mary at Richmond, she gave him a letter for her mother. The ambassador and his servants were now the only means by which the two could communicate. He wrote with growing admiration of the young woman who, he reported, patiently accepted the unfolding events, preferring to trust in God's mercy. The letter to her mother contained nothing subversive, merely 'comfort and consolation'.[48] The sentiments moved the ambassador, but Katherine demanded that he go at once to Henry to protest the treatment of herself and her daughter, so Chapuys attempted once more to petition the king. His report to Charles conveyed his pessimism, and, although he faithfully upheld his promise that no direct mention of war would be uttered, he could not help adding that 'something more than mere words will be required to make [Henry] return to the right path'.[49]

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For the sake of a brief respite from the never-ending drama of Chapuys' life, in which he was pulled in all directions by Katherine, Charles and Henry, we should look for a moment to other facets of the ambassador's life. Chapuys wielded impressive political power, which he had nurtured from his very first days in England. He had formed ties with the Spanish merchants as well as the merchants from the Hanseatic League, or Easterlings, as well as Flemish merchants and those from the Netherlands. These merchants supplied him with invaluable information about Henry's foreign policies, and in turn he made their commercial interests his own. The Spanish and German merchants were usually at odds, and, in September 1533, merchants from the German town of Lübeck seized property from the Spanish merchants while they traded in England. The Spanish merchants threatened war, and directly implored the ambassador to intercede; he was highly regarded as a skilled negotiator and mediator.

Chapuys had to proceed with delicacy to ensure that neither the

Spanish nor the Lübeckians were favoured while they sought an appropriate resolution. He took the matter to the Privy Council, but he had very little confidence in its ability to resolve any matter, lamenting its lack of discretion and tact regarding the issue. He had discovered that the English had assisted the Lübeck merchants by giving them provisions, which suggested Henry favoured Lübeck and other members of the Hanseatic League over Charles.

He found the Privy Council unyielding and argumentative. The council were horrified that the Spanish merchants had made such violent threats against the Lübeck merchants on English soil, and chided the ambassador for their actions. The council intimated that Charles should have resolved the squabble, to which Chapuys replied, with something of a diplomatic dismissal, that Charles could not control the merchants; he was their guardian, not their keeper. In any case, he added, it was Spanish custom to wage war on neighbouring cities without the direct consent of the Emperor.

Chapuys also felt it necessary to point out that the incident between the merchants had occurred on English soil, and therefore it was Henry's responsibility to repair the relationships, especially as English merchants were also involved, aiding and abetting the Lübeckians. The council attempted to deny this, but eventually capitulated, placing the blame squarely on Henry; they advised him against allowing his merchants to assist the Lübeckians, except to ensure they left quickly.

Chapuys was not particularly interested in who was to blame. He was doing what had been asked of him: to petition Henry's council on behalf of the slighted Spanish merchants. Nothing in the council was ever resolved quickly, the ambassador complained, and, after a day of negotiations, it was decided that Henry would demand that the Lübeckians restore the goods stolen from the Spanish merchants. The ambassador later complained that the matter was so straightforward that it should have been discussed and settled in half the time.[50]

For good measure, the Lübeckians' captain would be imprisoned if they failed to comply. The ambassador was satisfied that he had discharged his duty and overseen a satisfactory resolution. It is important to note that none of the foreign merchants objected to his involvement in their issues and disputes.

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Norfolk finally returned from France in September, missing the birth of his niece's new princess. Within days, he and Anne had a heated argument; Anne accused him of being too free with his speech (as we have seen, Norfolk was hardly the most tactful man at court) and too familiar with her.

Chapuys also reported that, since his return, the duke, who had

always made a point of seeking Chapuys out in the past, was avoiding him. The ambassador's requests for a meeting had been ignored, and when he visited Norfolk in private he found the duke's rooms full of clerks and officials. Norfolk was evidently avoiding being alone with the ambassador. When, by chance, they sat next to each other at dinner, Chapuys wrote with exasperated amusement that Norfolk had spoken earnestly and rather loudly about the French ladies at Francis's court and how strong the ties were now between England and France. Norfolk rather impetuously told the ambassador that there would never be peace in the world as long as Charles ruled so many kingdoms. Chapuys coldly replied that his power would be tested by the war with the Turks, and Norfolk was misinformed, as Charles's various kingdoms were 'as well governed as if each had a separate ruler.'[51] It seemed a pointless discussion but, despite the ambassador's attempts to speak of safer topics, Norfolk stubbornly continued his criticism.

The ambassador would not see Henry until 14 September, a week after Elizabeth's birth, and found Henry somewhat distant as well. However, his despatch to de Granvelle is an evocative sketch of Henry, individual courtiers and the general mood of the court.

Henry and his court had remained at Greenwich, Henry's favourite palace, following the birth of Elizabeth. There was general merriment at court, but Henry seemed somewhat reserved. On 14 September, the two men met in the royal gallery as Henry returned from Mass to discuss the issue of the merchants, which Chapuys had so expeditiously resolved. After only a few minutes, Henry quickly made his exit; like Norfolk, he seemed anxious to avoid a private conference, making his way instead to the Great Hall and his apartments. This left the ambassador in the hall, conversing with other privy councillors. However, he suspected that he had been part of a tableau, led into the Great Hall as a set-up. He wrote to Charles that he believed his presence was required to give the impression that he was paying court to the king. Choosing to stay rather than make his exit, he was at last admitted to Henry's chamber, where his suspicions were confirmed by an overly effusive and loud greeting by Norfolk who escorted him in to see the king. The subject of the merchants was once more brought up, and Henry asked that the ambassador write to Mary of Hungary, who was residing in Flanders, to issue orders to her Dutch merchants not to 'commit depredations on the coast of England, or otherwise injure the King's subjects at sea or in land'.[52]

Chapuys replied that such an order was unnecessary. Mary would of course keep her merchants in check. The ambassador admitted that the Dutch merchants were hard to control but Mary would speedily remedy the situation (the unspoken intimation being 'unlike the

English with their own merchants').

The meeting concluded; the men, including Chapuys, dined in the Great Hall at Greenwich Palace. Chapuys seemed to have Norfolk as his constant dining companion, and the two men carefully avoided domestic topics, preferring instead to discuss the recent peace treaty between Charles and the Ottomans. To understand their discussion, we must put their conversation in context. Christian Constantinople, modern-day Istanbul, fell to the Muslim Ottoman Turks in 1453. Straddling Europe and Asia, it was one of the most important cities to both the Christian and the Ottoman empires in terms of trade and strategic location. Charles had spent years and considerable money trying to win back the city for Christian Europe from the Ottoman Emperor, Suleiman I 'The Great'. However, Suleiman had ambitions to conquer Europe and, in 1526, Hungary, a powerful Eastern European nation by then, fell into his hands at the Battle of Mehacs, giving him the European foothold he needed.

The King of Hungary, Louis II, was then required to pay tribute to the Ottoman Empire, effectively becoming its satrap. It had been a tense relationship, and Louis constantly railed against his overseers, even decapitating an Ottoman messenger who had come to receive the tribute, then sending the head to Suleiman. When Louis died without an heir several months later, the contenders for the throne of Hungary were another Habsburg – Ferdinand, the Archduke of Austria and younger brother of Charles – and Janos Szapolyai, the Governor of Transylvania, or Erdel as it was then called. The Ottoman Empire, desperate to keep its hold on Hungary, supported Janos rather than Ferdinand, but Charles had his brother crowned regardless, instigating Ottoman military campaigns against the Habsburg Empire in Austria.

It would take seven years of war, but in July 1533 the peace treaty of Constantinople was signed between Suleiman and Ferdinand. This landmark event, after so many years of conflict, was a popular topic across Europe – and among Henry, his courtiers and the foreign embassies. To understand Henry's position, and thus Norfolk's, we must remember that King Francis, with whom Henry and Anne were eager to maintain an alliance, was also allied with the Ottoman Empire in an attempt to neutralise Charles's power across Europe. Therefore it was expected that the Ottomans would be praised at the Tudor court. Charles had his own plan, however: a Habsburg–Persian alliance. The Persian Empire had been at war with the Ottomans for centuries, so the two nations had a common interest. This was now the subject of conversation in the Great Hall, and what follows is yet another vivid scene of action, colour and superb humour.

Norfolk seems to have believed that, if news of an event had not been directly relayed to him, it had likely not occurred. He had heard

nothing of the treaty between the Ottomans and Ferdinand, and was doubtful it had happened. He further declared rather dismissively that, if it *had* occurred, Suleiman would have ensured his candidate, the Governor of Erden, received the best and greater part of Hungary, while Ferdinand was no doubt left with very little.

Chapuys chose not to contradict Norfolk, letting him carry on. The Great Hall was teeming with people, and at the ambassador's table sat nobles of the highest echelon. Several other courtiers joined the conversation as the topic turned to Hyreddin Barbarossa, the aggressive and highly skilled admiral of Suleiman's fleet. Norfolk was full of praise for the admiral, but he violently criticised the Persian ruler (Shah Tahmasp), who was successfully impeding Suleiman's military expansion.

One young courtier made the mistake of turning to Chapuys, praising Charles for his alliance and good relationship with the Persian Sufi (Safavid Shah). Norfolk aggressively cut the young man down to size, violently spitting across the table that he 'could name several Christian princes who are still on better terms with the said Sufi than the Emperor'.[53]

Chapuys remained composed in the face of Norfolk's outburst. With what sounds almost like a shrug, he said that time would tell who was right about the treaty, and he would happily agree to a wager with the duke and win his money – if it weren't for his conscience.

By now the conversation at the ambassador's table had attracted several spectators, including the boisterous and somewhat indiscreet Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, who immediately called up to Cromwell, who sat higher up the table. Suffolk apparently made a point of yelling to Cromwell that 'it must, however, be owned that in this affair of the Turk not only has the Emperor done his duty towards Christendom, but more than his duty, whereas we ourselves and the French have been so backward and done so little in it that it is to be feared God will punish us accordingly'.[54]

It was a direct criticism of the chancellor and the direction that English foreign policy seemed to be taking; it would not be the last time Cromwell and Suffolk came head to head. Chapuys said nothing, no doubt keeping his expression blank as they spoke in English. Whether or not he could understand at least part of it, his Flemish servant standing behind to serve him dinner spoke English perfectly and immediately conveyed the nature of Brandon's words. Cromwell seemed to say nothing, and Chapuys continued on as though Suffolk's outburst had never happened (indeed, Chapuys seems to have ignored the Duke of Suffolk whenever he could). He declared that Charles would be delighted by the news of other good relations with Persia,

and it was more respectable to have relations with Persia and other eastern realms than with the Ottomans. It was an unexpectedly sharp retort from the otherwise quiet ambassador, and Norfolk had no reply. The entire table seemed to be listening to the conversation, and Suffolk, never one to be suppressed, repeated his statement about English foreign policy to Cromwell, perhaps hoping for a greater response, but this time in French, so that Chapuys could understand.

It is a vivid and detailed description of a seemingly normal court banquet: Norfolk's overbearing attitude towards the younger generation of courtiers, Brandon's rough-and-ready behaviour, and the rivalry between him and Cromwell.

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Dinner concluded, Chapuys made to depart for his lodgings just up the river near the Tower, but in a moment of regret tried to mend fences with Norfolk, approaching him privately and asking if the older man would grant an audience. Norfolk had absolutely no desire for any more meetings with the ambassador, and called his nephew George, recently returned from France, to his side. A rapid conversation in English followed, and George left for Henry's chamber and fetched Cromwell. He and Norfolk were to be present for any further conversation, which the weary ambassador accepted.

Chapuys was clearly tired of the veiled references and dissimulations, and got right to the point. Henry's new daughter had been proclaimed Princess of Wales, which had originally been Mary's title, but Chapuys was willing to give them the benefit of the doubt, telling the men that he was sure the intention was not to declare Mary a bastard. The ambassador was also unusually candid: 'I saw no harm in the proclamation of the King's newly-born daughter, for, after all, every Royal son or daughter ought to be so called, but that I was only afraid that by doing so the rights of the first born (princess Mary) might be impaired'.

Chapuys had at last revealed his cards. Whatever Katherine might have wished, her orders were not always to Mary's benefit, and Chapuys, a little distanced from the situation, had to think about the long term, preferring to work with Henry than against him to secure Mary's position. If Mary remained legitimate, Chapuys felt that was at least a step in the right direction. If Chapuys was willing to compromise, surely so was Henry by not making Mary illegitimate.

Norfolk and Cromwell greeted the ambassador's words with stunned silence, before Cromwell admitted that nothing could be said for the time being, and that the question had to be put to Henry. George returned from Henry's chambers to say that the king had requested Norfolk and Cromwell. Chapuys could have pushed the issue, insisting on seeing Henry at once, as he used to in the first years

of his embassy. However, now older and wiser, he knew when not to push a point, admitting that he felt it safer to leave, for if he had demanded to see Henry he was sure he would have been refused in any case.

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The ambassador remained extremely well informed of Henry's actions within his Privy Council, keeping well ahead of the news. He was fond of boasting to Charles that he had his spies, many unnamed, but every so often he shines light on his source. In late 1533 his eyes and ears at court, apart from his own hired spies, came in the form of Gertrude Courtenay, Marchioness of Exeter. Courtenay had grown up in the royal nursery with Henry and his siblings, and in the first years of Katherine's marriage the two women forged a close bond. It was thus a blow to Henry that Courtenay took Katherine's side during the divorce. She also became one of Chapuys' most trusted correspondents. The marchioness was a powerful woman at court, and undoubtedly had her own spy network; she was a most useful ally. Courtenay informed him by letter that the Bishop of Winchester had left for France to inform Francis of Henry's displeasure that he had not prevented the papal excommunication. As Francis had promised to intercede for Henry, claiming that he could persuade the Pope, Henry felt it necessary to convey his irritation. Courtenay had access to meetings that even Chapuys' servants found it difficult to get near, namely the council's meetings regarding Katherine and Mary's household, what their rank should be and how their estates might be reduced.[55]

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The power players of the court – Norfolk, Suffolk, Cromwell and the Boleyns – are constant features of the ambassador's narrative. He gives us insights into their strengths and, without doubt, their weaknesses. One example is Norfolk's experience, albeit filtered through Chapuys, at the French court. Norfolk had, several weeks prior, made a great deal of his reception there: how well his visit went, how strengthened the diplomatic ties were due to his visit and so on. However, Norfolk had never been a natural ally of France, and preferred true and candid conversation to ploys and hidden meanings. The visit to France, when recounted by Norfolk, presents a rather less glamorous portrait of the visit. Norfolk grappled with Francis and his son the dauphin, a precocious and rather spoiled young man who spoke down to the considerably older duke. As Henry attempted to drag Francis into his affairs, the French king did the reverse. One of Francis's trusted captains, François Merveilles, had been executed by Charles in Milan, a city over which both monarchs had hotly fought for control. Francis was determined to write to Henry for assistance

and support.[56] The dauphin had been invested as Duke of Milan, but Charles had also invested his own choice, Francesco Sforza. According to Chapuys, the manner in which Norfolk was summoned by Francis and his son to a meeting suggested not the representative of a foreign power meeting with the King of France, but rather a lowly servant being brought before a monarch.

Norfolk almost seems flustered, accidentally referring to Sforza as Duke of Milan, at which point he was sharply interrupted by the young dauphin, who 'reprimanded the Duke for his mistake, declaring that he was the Duke of Milan and no other'.[57] It was an unusually candid admission to make to the ambassador, who made a point of reporting it: 'By which words Your Majesty will be able to judge better than I can what was the Duke's intention when he related this anecdote to me.'[58]

Regardless of Norfolk's comments, Henry's and Charles's relationship was undeniably at an impasse. It had not occurred to Charles, Katherine or indeed any of the Imperial embassy that Henry would so blatantly disregard the papal sentence of excommunication. If Chapuys or Charles had hoped this would finally resolve the matter of the divorce, they were to be sorely disappointed. Surely now the Emperor must consider an invasion? Chapuys was already two steps ahead. He systematically surveyed powerful members of the court, noting those to whom overtures should be made, and in late September set them out in a despatch to Charles. These potential allies against Henry were drawn from a pool of powerful and ancient Catholic families, some of whom posed a threat to Henry through their lineage, and others who had been part of earlier rebellions against the king. This move to instigate a rebellion employing Catholic nobles could have severely jeopardised the positions of Katherine and Mary, as well as Chapuys, and wrought serious repercussions for Emperor Charles.

The ambassador was already suggesting the appointment to Charles's court of several key supporters should he declare war on England. One in particular was Henry's maternal cousin, Reginald Pole. His mother, Margaret, was the daughter of the executed George, Duke of Clarence, and niece to Edward IV. Their lineage was in essence as royal in blood as Henry's, and the fact that Margaret had sided with Katherine in the divorce had pricked Henry's ego. Reginald was studying at the prestigious University of Padua, his tuition paid by Henry. It came as a nasty shock when Reginald wrote a treatise against his cousin's second marriage, titled '*Pro ecclesiastical unitatis defensione*' – 'In defence of Church unity'. Reginald was biting the hand that fed him, and the ambassador identified him as a potentially powerful threat to the throne. He saw a marriage between royal-

blooded Reginald and Mary as the way forward.

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We see a contradiction in Chapuys' letters to the Emperor that gives us an insight into the conflicted nature of the ambassador's duties. Katherine and her daughter had to get the best settlement possible from this divorce, but would they be better treated if there were a threat of war, which the ambassador tirelessly suggested to Charles, or through the peace that Chapuys was simultaneously seeking with Henry? There was no true sense of direction, because Charles was offering his ambassador very little assistance: his suggestions were vague and his strategy non-existent. The ambassador tried to cling to both options, no doubt hoping a path would present itself. Chapuys felt well and truly stuck in an embassy that he had hoped to escape and that was affecting his health (his gout was getting worse) and his mental state!!!!!.[59]

Chapuys still hoped the Scots would cause trouble and weaken Henry's position, despite the fact that a one-year peace treaty had just been concluded between them. However, Chapuys discovered an interesting twist. He maintained connections not only with the French ambassadors in England but those in Scotland as well, hoping that the latter might be drawn into a treaty with Charles. The French ambassador at King James's court in Scotland, Phillipe Beaubois, was in a state of mild hysteria. Scotland and France had been joined for centuries in the 'Auld Alliance', whereby either nation would come to the other's aid if attacked by England. Thus war with England concerned both nations, as did all peace treaties. However, now, Henry had managed to muscle Francis out of the proceedings by snubbing his ambassador, clearly with King James's acquiescence, which demonstrated a growing relationship between England and Scotland. Beaubois accepted the Imperial ambassador's cordial invitation to dinner as he passed through London en route to France.

Chapuys ran an impressive household; he had an eye for beautiful objects and had acquired fine furniture, of which he was exceedingly proud.[60] His cellars would have been well stocked as he frequently entertained foreign merchants, and we can assume he traded with them.

We can almost see Beaubois, who had endured such cold reception elsewhere, cordially welcomed into the ambassador's warm lodgings by the Tower, away from the eyes of court. He drank and dined well (when Chapuys wanted something, he worked hard for it), and, as he sat at Chapuys' finely carved table, Beaubois confided to Chapuys his distress: he had been sent to Scotland purely to protect French interests in peace negotiations between England and France's ally, Scotland. However, he was locked out; the matter had been concluded

without any input from him. Chapuys wrote, '[Beaubois] is so bewildered at it that he knows not what to think, now that the two kings [of England and Scotland] begin to give signs of mistrusting his master, the king of France, and shewing independence in their mutual affairs.'[61]

Chapuys had little time to ponder what this could mean for Imperial policy, as that same night a fire devastated the ambassador's rather fine lodging by the Tower. The blaze was so fierce that neither Chapuys nor his household had any time to save valuables. The shaken and utterly distraught ambassador lamented that everything had been consumed: his gold plate, clothes, furniture from Italy, which he had prized, and sentimental personal effects. He had enjoyed his residence, which had been a large house with two stone towers, stables, and a large garden leading onto the river, in which the ambassador often enjoyed walking. All of it was swept away within hours and the ambassador was left with nothing.[62]

For once, his cry of poverty was undeniably true. He had one outfit, which he was consequently wearing, no house and no money. The immediate assistance granted him by the German and Spanish merchants is a testament to their close friendship and the esteem in which they held Chapuys. Cromwell, who had been his neighbour, also offered assistance, but Chapuys felt it safer not to be in Cromwell's debt; he was not a man to whom the ambassador wanted to owe a favour.[63] In any case, the merchants provided him with rather luxurious lodgings near the area, as well as silver plate, which, according to Chapuys, could fill a whole room.[64] New and permanent lodgings were found quickly, and we must wonder if perhaps Cromwell did in fact have a hand in the matter, as the new house was a stone's throw from one of his own favourite, luxurious houses.[65] The ambassador's new residence was owned by Sir Giles Cappel, constable of Essex, who would generously loan the impressive house to Chapuys until 1539.[66] Cromwell and Chapuys had, as previously mentioned, been neighbours, and the ambassador's new lodgings, right by St Dunstan's in Stepney, once again kept them within walking distance of each other's houses.

The district provided the ambassador with an ideal political network and quick access to the Thames. Despite having little to spend on refurbishments, or so he tells us, he began to collect pieces once more for his new residence.[67] He certainly entertained other ambassadors, courtiers and merchants in his new home, and had become a master at acquiring prestige. Stepney also offered other benefits. This district in the mid-sixteenth century was not the slum and dark scene of crime and poverty of some three centuries later. On the contrary, Stepney was a bustling, prosperous area filled with

courtiers, nobles and silk merchants, and was a centre of intellectual, religious and humanistic learning. There, Chapuys found himself surrounded by men with radical ideas, and the glory of the Renaissance was encapsulated in a few streets. The area was fast becoming one of the most evangelical, and later Protestant, neighbourhoods in London, but this did nothing to dissuade the ambassador from his choice of residence. From here Chapuys was also closer to Greenwich, which Henry favoured above all his residences.

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Henry was waiting to hear from the French ambassador about a meeting between the Pope and Francis I being held in Marseille. Henry had attempted to dissuade Francis from such a meeting but had been ignored. He then asked Francis to entreat Clement on his behalf to lift the excommunication. Chapuys' account of Henry receiving a letter from Marseille captures the monarch's character and mood.

> No sooner had he begun to read the letters than he changed colour, and got into a most terrible passion, crushing one of the letters between his fingers and exclaiming that he had been betrayed, that the king of France had not behaved in as friendly a spirit as he had had reason to expect.[68]

The truth was that Francis was more concerned with reclaiming lost land than with Henry's matrimonial affairs or his religious revolution. Clement accepted Francis's requests for a return of territories in Italy, which Charles seized in the French defeat at Pavia in 1525, including the prized Duchy of Milan. In return, Francis agreed to swear loyalty to the papacy and reject religious reform. Francis's secondary mission of pleading Henry's case against excommunication was refused, but it was hardly a failed mission in Francis's eyes. Rumours spread through the English court, or were perhaps planted, that Clement had lifted the threat, but the ambassador pointed out that Henry's reaction to the letter indicated otherwise. He heard that Henry had immediately sent a messenger with 400,000 crowns to the English ambassadors in Marseille, to be used to sway the Pope and his cardinals, but he could not verify the rumour.[69]

Once again we have a glimpse of how Henry's mind worked: he was offended that his marriage was of such little importance to Clement and Francis. It strengthened his resolve, or stubborn determination depending on the point of view, to keep Anne. According to Anne and her ladies, who were not perhaps the most unbiased of sources, Henry made one of his famously grand statements, passionately declaring that he 'would rather be reduced to beggary, and ask alms from door to door, than abandon and desert the Lady [Anne] whom he loved more than ever'.[70]

A potentially dangerous drama unfolded throughout 1533 that threatened to ensnare not only Katherine, but Thomas More and Bishop Fisher. The cautious ambassador initially made no mention of it. Elizabeth Barton, known as 'The Holy Maid of Kent', or later 'The Mad Nun of Kent', had been a thorn in Henry's side for some time. She claimed to be divinely guided, receiving holy visions that quickly gained a following. Both Henry and Wolsey had audiences with her in 1528, when her visions were of no threat. However, she spoke out against Henry's divorce and new marriage, prophesying that, if Henry remarried, he would die shortly thereafter and forever burn in the fires of hell.[71] Anything to do with predicting or speaking about the king's death was treason, but it would take Cromwell over a year to be rid of her. Both More and Fisher had made the error of entertaining her, although they in no way endorsed her visions, but Katherine, perhaps acting on Chapuys' advice, ignored her entirely. In fact the first mention of Barton in Chapuys' despatches are in regards to her arrest. The ambassador gave very little background to the story, merely remarking that she had

> hitherto borne both the name and reputation of a good, simple, and sanctified creature, and of having been blessed at times with Divine revelations. I understand the cause of her imprisonment is her having said, written, and affirmed in public, as well as in private, that she had had a revelation to the effect that within a very short period of time not only would this king lose his crown, but would also be expelled from the kingdom and damned, and that she had had a spiritual vision of the particular place and spot destined to him in Hell.[72]

He added that Katherine had repelled Barton's advances, 'for notwithstanding the many and oft-repeated efforts made by the nun to obtain an audience, in order, as she said, to console her in her affliction and adversity, it was always denied her. The Queen, in fact, would never receive her, and now finds that she acted wisely.'[73]

It would have been a convenient solution to Henry's problem if Katherine had in fact communicated with Barton, and it is likely that Chapuys warned her against it. Fisher, More and the Marchioness of Exeter, on the other hand, were not so lucky, as they had been on friendly terms with Barton.[74]

Chapuys was also careful to refer to Barton disparagingly, disassociating himself from the situation and calling her visions 'foolish superstitions'.[75] Cromwell's method was to hold a secret trial of the case; he quickly delivered a damming verdict. Barton and her followers were declared traitors. He would do the same to Anne in less than three years.

Rarely do we encounter insights into Cromwell's character, a man

who spent so many years observing those around him but about whom we have few observations. Chapuys provides us with some of the most vivid.

He reported that Cromwell, in the presence of Barton who had been brought into the hall, issued a public declaration in person,

> that every Englishman was greatly bound to return thanks to the Almighty, who, by His divine goodness and mercy, had permitted the damnable abuses and wicked deeds of the said Nun, her adherents and accomplices, to be discovered and made manifest; which crimes and misdeeds he [the Chancellor], for many good reasons, declined to specify, though he said distinctly that she and her adherents had sinned first against God, and next against the person, authority, and royal rank of the King, who was, as he said, the non plus ultra of princes, past and present. On this last theme the Chancellor went on descanting, bestowing as many praises on the King as his heart and tongue could allow.[76]

Chapuys dryly added that Cromwell not only denounced Barton but used the occasion to address issues that were the subject of national conversation. He eulogised his audience, praising their obedience, loyalty and fealty to their king who, as they knew,

> in accordance with the law of God, reason, and conscience, divorced his wife, whom he would henceforwards call dowager princess. That the entirely legitimate marriage contracted and duly celebrated with his present Queen was not undertaken for the gratification of his individual pleasure, nor was it a case without precedent in history.[77]

The divorce, Cromwell told his captive audience, was in the quest to produce a legitimate male heir, 'on which depended the repose and tranquillity of his own kingdom and subjects'.[78] Cromwell went on to criticise the Pope, urging his audience to ignore any rumours of excommunication, to take no heed of certain sentences, null and void, as Clement

> had been induced, nay seduced, to pronounce them by many strange means, and principally by the damnable and diabolic instrumentality of the said Nun and her accomplices, who had addressed to His Holiness letters in which, supposing herself to be inspired by prophetic spirit and divine revelation, she had encouraged him to pronounce a most disastrous sentence.[79]

Cromwell's impassioned words and odd claim that Barton had influenced the Pope seemed to have little effect on his audience; the ambassador reported that they remained quiet and almost indifferent to his speech. However, the mood changed with Cromwell's last pointed words:

> The nun and her accomplices, wishing by her detestable

> hatred and abominable malignity to induce the English, under colour of religion, to rebel, had effectually spread, published, and given out in writing that she by divine revelation knew the King would be shortly dethroned and cast away from his kingdom by his own subjects. Then many of those present, stung as it were by this last remark, began to cry out, 'To the stake! To the stake![80]

Cromwell had tapped into the court's deepest fear: that Barton could be used as a weapon against any who had supported Katherine against Henry, to paint them as dangerous criminals. Chapuys slyly reported (in cipher) that anyone so accused was more likely to have money and property confiscated than go to the Tower, as Henry had an almost pathological obsession with acquiring such things above all else.[81] Barton had too large a following to be merely executed; Henry needed to knock her off her pedestal first, and paraded her before the public in London, denouncing her visions.

The ambassador referred to the situation as a farce, it seemed to him that Henry felt compelled to 'blot out from people's minds the impression they have that the Nun is a saint and a prophet'.[82]

However, he feared that Henry would be tempted to use Barton to blot Katherine's reputation, despite there being no evidence to support a case against her. He lamented that Henry no longer showed signs of the humanity and mild temper that Chapuys had seen in his first years at court.[83]

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The complex relationship between politics, self-interest and religious conviction led to fluid alliances at court. Where once Norfolk and Chapuys had enjoyed a more or less congenial working relationship, now it was marred by frustration and mutual suspicion. By the end of 1533 it seemed as though the two men would never be able to repair their relationship. The odds grew even longer when, in December, Chapuys repeatedly overheard Norfolk verbally abuse the Pope to whoever would listen. It was a dramatic departure from the conservative Catholic duke that Chapuys had first encountered, and he communicated his surprise to the Emperor, remarking, 'When speaking about His Holiness he held still more blasphemous language, assuring his audience that the Pope was a wretch and a bastard, a liar and a bad man, and that he would stake wife, children, and even his own person, to be revenged on him.'[84]

It was an uncharacteristically aggressive and rash statement to make, and the ambassador suspected that it was more for Henry and Anne's benefit than anything else. Norfolk was in an increasingly weak political position as he was muscled out by younger courtiers, like George Boleyn, and shrewder statesmen, such as Cromwell. If we view Norfolk's words through Chapuys' eyes, they show a frustrated,

undermined, old-fashioned noble who was desperate to remain relevant.

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The infant Elizabeth was escorted by her great-uncle Norfolk from the various royal nurseries to her established estate of Hatfield, in Hertfordshire. However, it was his visit to Mary that unleashed a torrent of animosity and angry words from the ambassador. It is unclear whether it was Henry or Anne who had conjured up the idea, or rather punishment, that Mary be forced to serve her half-sister, who now also held her title of Princess of Wales. Chapuys felt her pain acutely, reporting that Norfolk would, in the next few days, inform Mary of her new role, and escort her to Hatfield himself.[85] When Mary arrived, Norfolk asked if she wished to pay her respects to the Princess Elizabeth. It was too sharp a jab for the emotional youngster. According to the ambassador, Mary replied,

> She knew of no other princess in England but herself; that the daughter of Madame de Pembroke was no princess at all. True, if the King, her father, acknowledged her as his daughter, just as he called the duke of Richmont his son, she could treat the latter as brother, and her as sister, but in nowise as Princess of Wales.[86]

Her last words to Norfolk on his departure reveal the scared, tired and angry young girl under the mantle of princess.

> The duke asked her whether she had any message for the King, to which she replied: 'None, except that the Princess of Wales, his daughter, asked for his blessing.' When the duke observed that he would not dare take such a message to the King, she interrupted him by saying; 'Then go away, and leave me alone.'[87]

Her aggressive stance lasted until the duke left, upon which she ran to her chambers and, under the weight of her distress, conflicted emotions and confusion, burst into tears, which the ambassador reported was her almost constant state of emotion.

Henry's plausible response, according to Chapuys, was to berate the duke for not being harsh enough. Henry would have to subdue her himself.[88]

The year 1533 had begun with such promise for Henry. His new wife was pregnant and awaiting her coronation, and, despite bearing a daughter, Anne had proved to Europe and Henry himself that she was fertile and, most importantly, that Henry himself could produce an heir. However, Katherine remained a dark cloud over celebrations. For the latter half of 1533 she was housed at Buckden in Huntingdonshire, a red-brick mansion owned by the Bishop of Lincoln. Katherine was popular with the people of Buckden and several priests who visited her. For security's sake, and to avoid any further outpouring of

devotion to Katherine, Henry decided that she should be moved slightly further north to Somersham where she could be more contained. Winter had set in, and the court prepared for the Christmas celebrations. However, Henry wanted Katherine moved to Somersham before the festive season commenced, and gave the unenviable task of forsaking the warmth of court for a cold reception at Buckden to the Duke of Suffolk, Charles Brandon.[89]

Chapuys rarely wrote about Brandon, one of Henry's childhood friends. The duke had a reputation as a playboy, and the ambassador seems to have had very little to say about him. However, Brandon had an aptitude for making rather stupid decisions. His marital tally would only be two short of Henry's, but what he lacked in numbers he made up for in the truly scandalous. We have already noted his impetuous and short-sighted marriage to Henry's sister, Mary, but Mary had passed away in July of 1533, and Brandon wasted no time in choosing his next bride.

The only complication was that the woman in question was engaged to Brandon's ten-year-old son, so it was rather a shock to the court when Brandon married his nineteen-year-old daughter-in-law-to-be, Catherine Willoughby, whom Chapuys described as the daughter of a Spanish lady.[90] The incident was a constant source of amusement. Chapuys admitted that he knew not what to make of the affair, but his report is rather tongue-in-cheek: 'In contracting such a marriage, the Duke will no doubt please the ladies of this country, who, imitating his example, will no doubt take their revenge, when accused of marrying again immediately after the death of their husbands, as they are in the habit of doing.'[91]

Thus Christmas of 1533 should have been a merry time for the duke, who was no doubt looking forward to spending it with his young and invigorating wife. Such plans were put on hold as he made the journey from London into Huntingdonshire (now Cambridgeshire) to visit Katherine. He had two orders: to reduce Katherine's household and servants, and to escort her to Somersham. If we believe Chapuys' reports, Somersham was like a tomb, a damp, dark place where the cold air seeped into one's bones. He had already protested against Henry's previous alternative, Fotheringhay, a name that made the place sound surprisingly positive, but Somersham was far worse than Buckden. Henry knew it, and so did Katherine.

No doubt Brandon was confident that he would return home in a matter of days. However, Chapuys knew Katherine better, and he relished every amusing and embarrassing detail of Suffolk's efforts. The reports by Chapuys and Brandon closely correspond; the duke was brutish, in Chapuys' opinion, and Brandon's own despatches do little to redeem him. He did not entirely agree with his mission, and could

not bring himself to physically move the woman whom he had served for over two decades. Maria de Salinas, Katherine's loyal friend and, incidentally, now Brandon's mother-in-law, wrote secretly to the ambassador that Brandon had taken Communion before he left, 'declaring at the time of his departure that he wished some accident might happen to him on the road that should exempt him at once from accomplishing such a journey and mission'.[92]

Both Chapuys and Brandon report that and his entourage bullied its way into Buckden, and dined in Katherine's hall before disclosing the purpose of their visit. Katherine's protest was loud and angry. Brandon wrote to Norfolk, who had had his own memorable encounters with Katherine, that she refused all requests regarding her title, household and proposed move.[93] Chapuys' detailed account is based perhaps on the information from spies and informants at Buckden, such as John de Atequa, a bishop in Katherine's employ. December was drawing to a close, and Katherine and Brandon remained in their domestic stalemate. The servants were dismissed, and even the chambermaids, who assisted Katherine in her private apartments, were threatened, but two remained. Her household now consisted of an apothecary, physician, two maids and her confessor. Brandon's final move was to simply pack Katherine's household furniture and baggage up around her, and have a litter prepared for immediate transportation.[94]

Katherine responded by locking herself in her chambers, while Brandon sat on the other side of the door beseeching her to let him in. Katherine declared that they would have to physically force her to leave, to bind her with ropes and bundle her off.[95]

Mass hysteria descended on Buckden. Servants were dismissed but refused to leave, Brandon was not confident enough to break down the heavy oak door that stood between him and his mission, and Katherine refused to budge and stayed in her chambers. Chapuys may have been surprised by Katherine's barricading herself in her room, but he could hardly fault it; he had heard much about the proposed estate, writing that 'the house is surrounded by water and marshes, the most insalubrious and pestilential residence in all England'.[96]

It is not an exaggeration; the estate's history corroborates his view. Previously home to the bishops of Ely, Somersham was surrounded by marsh and a large moat. Nicholas West, Bishop of Ely in the 1520s, complained to Cardinal Wolsey that he was surrounded by water, and that he could neither leave the estate or have people come to him without the use of a boat. Any other access was dangerous. It was an area prone to flooding; the bishop also reported that the banks of the moat were constantly overflowing, and that '500 men were working on them to prevent the low country there from being drowned, and

100 men watched at night, in case the water should break through'.[97]

No improvements had been made to the estate since the 1520s; thus it is easy to understand Chapuys' indignation and Katherine's refusal to move there. She threatened that they would have to drag her out, 'as otherwise she would incur the guilt of voluntary suicide'.[98] It was distressing enough that Katherine, a devout Catholic, would even contemplate such an option.

However, Chapuys had a second drama to deal with: Mary had been forced to wait upon her half-sister in a household hand-picked by Anne and Henry, and therefore a naturally a hostile environment. Mary's own servants were dismissed, though she was allowed to keep a chambermaid. Both mother and daughter had feared they might be poisoned, and Chapuys had heard that Mary was no longer allowed to have her maid taste her food first. If this was the case, the ambassador wrote in a high state of agitation, Henry was in essence 'opening the gates to the perils and insidious dangers from which may God Almighty preserve her'![99]

An element of paranoia creeps into Chapuys' December 1533 despatches. It stems not only from what his informants relayed to him from Katherine and Mary, but from courtiers whose own political agendas are difficult to discern, as they remain faceless – only silhouettes sketched on parchment.

For example, the ambassador reported a rumour, rife at court, that Katherine was unwell and would not live long. There was no truth to this, but Chapuys began to envision a coup against Katherine. He compares her downfall to that of Wolsey, insisting that the same 'trick' had been used before the cardinal died, 'thus covering beforehand any secret designs they may have formed respecting her'.[100]

It did not help to calm Chapuys' nerves when an unnamed courtier sent a panicked letter to the ambassador warning that Katherine must ensure that her bedchamber door was locked every night,

> for he had heard from a good quarter that she was in danger of some trick being practiced one fine night upon her. He could not positively say which – whether to inflict bodily harm, or accuse her of adultery, or pretend that she was planning a flight to Scotland or to Wales, in order to raise there a rebellion against the King; but he assured me that the Queen is truly in danger of some sort, and that he knows it from a very good source.[101]

The ambassador wisely added that the report sounded incredible even to his ears, but that it was his duty to report all rumours.[102]

The ambassador could only think of one remedy: to convince Mary, Governess of the Low Countries, to allow a halt to Imperial trade with England. It would have been an extreme blow to Henry, and Chapuys anticipated he would lash out by punishing Mary and

Katherine even more. So why would he propose a measure that he knew would exacerbate the situation? The answer, simply, is that Chapuys was once more considering the bigger picture, beyond Katherine and Mary. England and Henry had to be brought to heel, and in the ambassador's opinion this was the most expedient means of achieving this.[103]

Nothing came of it, as usual, as Charles made no move. Katherine won her battle, staying at Buckden, as a bedraggled Duke of Suffolk trudged home to court.

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Even after Suffolk had left, Katherine had exacerbated her ill health by remaining locked in her chamber, refusing to eat food brought to her or to take fresh air. 'She has refused to eat or drink anything that her new servants bring her. The little food she takes in this time of tribulation is prepared by her maids-in-waiting within her own bedroom; so that, in point of fact, her sitting-room, bed-chamber, and kitchen are all in one.'[104]

Isolated, she harangued the ambassador, insisting that she was ill and neglected. We must bear in mind that Katherine was now fifty and had suffered from illness for several years.

> Poison was not unheard of – Italian poisons had long been rumoured to be used throughout Europe – but Henry himself added to Chapuys' fears. The king made a rather nasty remark to the French ambassador and Gregory Casale, his ambassador to Rome, that he had heard of an attempt to kill Katherine by artificial dropsy, a massive swelling of the flesh, through drugged wine.[105]

All this played to Chapuys' paranoia. Throughout this period, both mother and daughter would suffer from various illnesses, and Chapuys was sure that every physician sent to aid them was there to 'disguise the poison they are giving'.[106]

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Chapuys maintained his friendship with the Scottish ambassador, who continued to visit him in Stepney. What had begun as a mutual indifference had blossomed into a personal rapport, as the ambassador mentions that the two dined and talked of various matters, only a few of which were actually business. Far from isolated, Chapuys was well and truly the go-to man for the other embassies. English raids began again across the Scottish borders, for which Henry apologised to the Scottish embassy, but he also sought to strengthen ties with his Scottish cousin.

Once peace had been renewed, the Scottish ambassador told Chapuys that a bill would be passed, 'that upon failure of the issue he [Henry] now has, or may have in future, from the Lady he has

married, the succession to the English crown shall devolve upon king James'.[107] Chapuys reacted to this news by sowing the seeds of doubt:

> I made him feel that what this King proposes is not only a thing against conscience, since he tries by such means to deprive the Princess of her right … but is besides very inconsiderate on the part of the King … since he has already one daughter, and Anne de Boulans is now in the family way again, and in a state of health and of an age to have many more children.[108]

This report is of particular interest for two reasons: firstly, he refers to Anne being pregnant again, and is one of the first ambassadors to do so. Considering he and Anne had not yet met face to face, his information is surprisingly accurate. The other point of interest is his reference to Anne, not as the 'concubine' or other pejorative term, but as the almost respectful Anne de Boulans.

That Anne was pregnant again so soon was yet another positive sign for Henry. Charles wrote to his ambassador that an alliance with England must now take precedence over his aunt's pleas for help. Chapuys received the letter on 23 January 1534, with instructions to convey part of it to Katherine. When bad news was to be imparted, it usually fell to the ambassador. Chapuys replied,

> I shall this very night send a messenger to the Queen to inform her of ... such observations and advice as will effectually put a stop to any further applications, and make her take the whole in good part, affording her at the same time the consolation which she so much needs.[109]

Charles made no mention of Mary, who often slipped his mind, but Chapuys wrote to her often. He went beyond his post, sending her books from his own personal library and others he had purchased in London. These were the only gifts he knew would lift her mood and divert her. Her happiness and well-being were as important to the ambassador as Katherine's health.[110]

In fact it could be said that Mary occupied Chapuys' thoughts even more than Katherine: she was young, pretty and a valuable bargaining tool, and Chapuys was fiercely protective. He had various informants who kept him abreast of foreign marriage proposals, all of which Chapuys deemed unsatisfactory. He was her trusted advisor in such matters, perhaps even more so than Katherine, instructing her in how to respond and most importantly to fend off such proposals. 'I some days ago informed [Mary] that there was a talk in France of marrying her to the Marquis de Saluce [Saluzzo], and that she must be on her guard not to consent to that or other equally unsuitable marriages, if proposed to her, nay, to none at all.'[111]

Chapuys' believed that, if Mary could only see her father in person, her singular beauty, goodness and virtue might induce the king to

change his purpose. If the eighteen-year-old Mary were to attend court, Chapuys was certain she would win the favour of the court and Henry himself.[112]

The Imperial ambassador wrote separately to de Granvelle and Charles that, despite his best efforts, the ebb and flow of fortune was decidedly favouring the French embassies, noting that the court's affection towards him had cooled. He blamed this on the nobles surrounding the king, who were 'sedulously spreading the rumour that Your Majesty cares naught for all these things … few, if any, here dare come and frequent my society, just as if I were already a prisoner, and war had actually been declared between the Empire and England'.[113]

Again, we see the distinctive styles of writing he employed, and the information he chose to convey to – and keep from – his correspondents. To de Granvelle, also sometimes referred to by his last name rather than title, Perrenot, the ambassador's letters are more personal, broader in their scope and topics. He had no qualms begging his friend for money, reminding him not too subtly of the fire the year before, and complaining that his gout grew worse with each passing month and seemed especially bad in the colder months.[114]

He also told de Granvelle about changes in the sumptuary laws, which had come in to effect in late 1533, and the change made to the legislation. Henry had further segregated the nobility: 'The wearing of silks and foreign furs has been forbidden to any but nobles and privileged persons, and the price and quality of cloth has been fixed according to the rank of such persons; but these measures are so unpopular that it is hoped they will not last long.'[115]

However, it is his last paragraph which gives us an insight into how Chapuys viewed himself and his role. He writes almost wistfully of living in the age of Nestor or the Sybils. On the surface, we could simply regard this as the ambassador's penchant for mythology and parables. However, if we delve into the myths of Nestor and the Sybils, they elucidate Chapuys' humanist tendencies, his intellectual Renaissance interests and academic underpinning.

The Sybils of Greek mythology were prophetesses revered in both Greek and Roman society. The Classics, of course, were an integral part of Renaissance art. Michelangelo's Sybils in his Sistine Chapel frescoes are powerful representations, and they are hidden in elements of medieval Christianity. Nestor, on the other hand, is more of a father figure. Once an Argonaut, Nestor also participated in the Trojan War, but not as a warrior. He was an old man, but he was integral to the battle in the role of peacemaker and mediator between the Greek king Agamemnon and the unruly and stubborn freelance assassin Achilles. Chapuys possibly identified with Nestor, his concern and main purpose being to keep two hot-headed monarchs in order, and to

negotiate and keep the peace. Chapuys only showed this side of himself to those closest to him, who would understand his meaning. De Granvelle was one of the few and replied in the same informal style, advising Chapuys and making observations, all of which the ambassador took on board.[116]

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The first of Chapuys' 1534 audiences with the king contained the dramatic flair to which we are now accustomed. The ambassador was early for his appointment and chose to call first on the Duke of Norfolk, whom he had not seen in two months. The duke seemed to the ambassador to be in a state of unusual agitation. Henry was well aware that Mary and Katherine would be the top of the ambassador's agenda. Chapuys reported that Norfolk hastily urged,

> For God's sake, Monsieur, I beg and entreat you on this day to use all your discretion and prudence, and so moderate your language that you may not fall into trouble or inconvenience. You are about to enter on matters so odious and unpleasing that not all the sugar or sauces in the world would render them palatable.[117]

The ambassador's response was carefully engineered, as he knew it would get back to Henry before his audience. He attempted to soothe the older man, assuring him that his words would be moderate, adding that Norfolk 'ought also to consider that friendship between princes, unless well founded and rooted, does not generally last long'.[118]

When he and Henry met, the ambassador got straight to the point. Katherine's treatment was unacceptable and Mary was being deprived of her status in a hostile household run by Anne Boleyn's aunt, Anne Shelton.

Henry remained cordial, saying that the ambassador must know surely that Henry was legitimately married to Anne, his former marriage having been judicially declared null. Therefore Katherine could not be queen, nor could Mary be his legitimate daughter. Henry seems to have assumed this would, as the ambassador put it, 'shut my mouth'.[119]

However, the ambassador replied, 'With regard to the sentence pronounced by the archbishop of Canterbury on the divorce suit, he ought to make as little of it as of that which King Richard caused to be pronounced by the bishop of Bath against the sons of King Edward, declaring them bastards.'[120]

No canon law or rule or even historical analogy Chapuys threw at him would sway Henry, nor could Chapuys truly have expected it to, but he persisted, declaring his incredulity at Henry's comments. It no doubt grated on his legal mind when Henry magnanimously offered to

send the ambassador several books which would explain why Mary could not inherit.[121]

The ambassador wisely read the changing mood of his audience, and simply asked that Mary receive better treatment and be allowed to see her mother. He added yet another historical analogy. Taking into account the rumours swirling around Katherine's health, he was sure that Henry would not want any harm to come to Mary; even if she were to die of natural causes, Henry would be hard-pressed to prove there had been no outside involvement.

> I added that he ought to take example of Henry II of England, one of the greatest kings in this country, who had to perform a very great and grievous penance in public, besides promising to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, all owing to his want of due veneration towards St. Thomas of Canterbury [Thomas Beckett], and his having been the cause of his death.[122]

Henry was not one to be lectured to by his wives or courtiers, let alone the ambassador. His response was markedly cool: Mary was his daughter, she was healthy and well housed, and he could dispose of her as he pleased.[123]

Sensing that yet another impasse had been reached, and that Henry was beginning to get restless, Chapuys hastily moved to his other pressing issue: the fragile Anglo–Imperial relations. The ambassador reported to Charles that Henry was rather sardonic about the matter, declaring it was fortunate he was not a vindictive man when it came to his treatment by the Emperor, who had so disappointed England.[124]

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March and April of 1534 could be seen as a turning point. In the space of two months, the Succession Act was passed, declaring Elizabeth legitimate and Mary illegitimate; an oath was imposed recognising the Boleyn marriage; and, after six years of indecisiveness, Clement at last pronounced his finding that Henry's marriage to Katherine had been valid. The finding made no difference to Henry and Anne, however, and certainly came as hollow comfort to Katherine and Mary. Further, Henry's old friend and advisor Thomas More, who had hitherto kept out of the marriage and succession dramas, and Bishop Fisher, Katherine's staunch defender, were both imprisoned in the Tower.[125] Many at court believed that More's past relationship with the king had kept his head above the water, or more succinctly on his shoulders, but Henry, who had hitherto tolerated More's silence on the divorce, had run out of patience. On 13 April, More was summoned to appear before a commission and swear his allegiance to the parliamentary Act of Succession.[126] On the subject of Henry's marriage to Anne, More and Fisher were willing to accept its

legitimacy. But it wasn't enough: what Henry truly wanted was their allegiance to him over the Pope. Neither man could bring themselves to swear to Henry's supremacy.[127]

This state of affairs increased pressure on Chapuys, who was no longer permitted to visit Mary. He feared that, without his guidance and influence, Mary, who embodied the more passionate and headstrong traits of both her mother and father, might act recklessly, now that Anne's daughter was heir to the throne. He was pleased, however, that Katherine had been moved not to the dreaded Somersham but to Kimbolton Castle in Cambridgeshire, which was a smaller but superior estate. The ambassador was also exasperated by Henry's attempt to force her to swear to the new Act of Succession. She had responded by loudly reading out the recent papal sentence in her favour.[128]

The ambassador could only draw up a formal protest for her, and in July 1534 he applied to visit Katherine at Kimbolton. Receiving no answer from Henry or Cromwell, he decided to demonstrate his determination – and test the boundaries. He set out for Kimbolton with sixty horses of his suite and some Spanish merchants, first taking care to attract as much attention in London as he could.[129] For a man who usually worked behind the scenes, he had developed a talent for dramatic spectacle. He was not stopped until he approached Kimbolton, where he was met with orders that he was not to be admitted. Perhaps Henry had not wished to cause a scene in London or let the people of London see the Imperial ambassador being prevented from seeing Katherine. When he was stopped 5 miles short of the house, he acquiesced but sent his entourage onwards. His men began rambunctiously to sing Spanish songs around the moat of Kimbolton.[130] Chapuys' ploy worked; he and his men were eventually admitted to the hall for an audience with a most amused Katherine.

Shortly after his return to London, Chapuys was summoned to a meeting of the Privy Council, at the unusually early hour of 7 a.m., and was met by Cranmer, Norfolk, Thomas Audley and Thomas Boleyn, among others, who brought him to the king's chamber.[131]

It was a royal message for the ambassador, imposingly formal and not one to be argued with, though why Henry felt the need to repeat himself is unclear.

> The King, acknowledging the good offices that I had always rendered in the fulfilment of my charge, and the praiseworthy inclination continually shown by me towards the preservation of the friendship between Your Majesty and his master, the King, in which inclination and desire he earnestly begged me to persevere, had considered it fit to inform me that his detestable and abominable first marriage was null by law, he had contracted a

> fresh one, more for the repose and quietness of his kingdom than for his own pleasure, with the one who was at present his Queen.[132]

However, 'Madame Catherine and Madame Marie', as the men called the two women, were obstacles, and Henry detested obstacles. If they continued to refuse to acknowledge and swear to the new Oath of Succession, Henry would begin proceedings against them.[133] Chapuys appeared flustered by this action, which he had not expected. He immediately protested, insisting that Mary was a legitimate heir and, as the Pope had decreed, the marriage had been valid. He bitterly reminded those present that his petitions to speak on Mary and Katherine's behalf to Parliament had been denied, which he suspected was a way of ensuring Parliament voted correctly on the Oath of Succession.

The main issue, namely Mary and Katherine's 'obstinate' behaviour, elicited the ambassador's heated response. He told Charles that the king,

> after 25 years of marriage contracted by princes so wise, with sound and mature deliberation, and after a most solemn decision of the Church issued in two different sentences, refused to acknowledge the truth … I could not guess what their motive and purpose could be in thus representing to me what they called 'the stubborn obstinacy'. I had neither the authority nor the means of dissuading [the two women] from their opinion in this respect … I would rather die a thousand deaths than try to dissuade them, unless I had express orders from Your Majesty.[134]

It was not Chapuys' problem that Henry had failed to subdue his previous wife. If, however, Henry was determined to continue the harassment of his previous wife and child, he would face not only universal blame, but also Charles's disapproval and that of his relatives, who made up an impressive contingency of European royalty.[135] Chapuys directed most of his anger at Cranmer, the man who had helped engineer the divorce and who presided over Henry's marriage. The ambassador was used to heated arguments with Henry and any courtier who crossed his path. However, Cranmer had up to this point successfully managed to avoid a direct confrontation with Chapuys: he describes the archbishop as a decidedly meek and shy man who hid behind the rest of the group during the meeting.[136] 'He dared not formally enter the lists, and only said a word here and there to the others, to show that he was concerned in the affair.'[137]

The phrase 'enter the lists' is appropriate: entering into debate with the ambassador was akin to a psychological joust. Chapuys typically assures the Emperor that he came out on top in this particular altercation, and the meeting was called to a hasty conclusion.

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Henry was determined that Katherine submit; several officers of her household were imprisoned and her maids and other servants put under house arrest when they refused to swear to the Oath of Succession. This sent Chapuys flying back to the court, which was now at Richmond, unannounced and certainly uninvited.[138] His messenger reached the king just prior to his arrival, but this time Chapuys had taken care not to announce the purpose of his visit, as the very mention of Katherine would result in a closed door. Norfolk was instructed to take the ambassador to dinner, and made a very public show of berating him.[139] The ambassador acknowledged that Charles had forbidden his ambassador from witnessing the wedding pageants and carousals of London, or from attending court without either his permission or de Granvelle's. However, Norfolk also accused him of purposely delaying audiences, which the ambassador strenuously denied. Henry denied Chapuys the pleasure of an audience; he was anxious to hunt and simply sent a response: 'The King acknowledges no superior, equal, or controller, in this his kingdom or elsewhere: no one can have anything to do with the laws and statutes of the realm, which all his subjects are bound to obey.'[140]

Henry for one had lost interest in sparring with the ambassador.

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When it was rumoured that Elizabeth would move to another household, an ill and hysterical Mary wrote to the ambassador three messages in twenty-four hours, begging him to advise her. Calmly and in a fatherly manner, he tried to allay her concerns; no harm would come from her obeying her father's commands to move, if they occurred. What we might perceive as false hope, Chapuys merely saw as strengthening of character: 'I strongly advised her, while maintaining her usual modesty, to speak boldly and show good heart, and yet not to carry things to such extremity as to oblige her guards to use violence as in past times.'[141] The ambassador drafted a letter for Mary to read out if the council tried to force her to move. He assured Charles that he had drafted the letter at her insistence, 'not that I thought this necessary considering the great wisdom with which she is gifted'. Some leeway was gained: Mary was permitted to travel separately from Elizabeth when the household moved to Greenwich in September 1534. Chapuys moved about, as he described, in disguise, to glimpse Mary as she arrived, beating Elizabeth and the household by over an hour. His pride and admiration for the young woman is evident; her movements, grace and beauty only increased his dissatisfaction with her treatment.[142]

Anne had been overheard months prior threatening to kill Mary: 'A gentleman worthy of credit has this day sent me word that the

Queen's mistress has said more than once, and with great assurance ... she will certainly cause the death of the said Princess by the sword or otherwise.' Chapuys did not name his source, stating only that the gentleman was creditable. Her brother George warned his sister of her potentially dangerous words, adding that such an action might offend her husband, but she brushed him off, declaring that 'she cared not if she did, even if she were to be burnt or flayed alive in consequence'.[143]

Anne had a propensity for rash language, and crucially seemed unable to temper her thoughts, speaking without thinking about the implication of her words. Chapuys was unsurprised by her outburst, and speculated whether her words and tempestuous behaviour belied a deep fear and hurt.

The pregnancy mentioned in an earlier letter of the ambassador's seemed to disappear, and, as there is no record of Anne taking to her chamber for confinement, it is possible that she miscarried.[144] Chapuys refrained from making too much out of the development, simply noting that Henry showed signs of annoyance, and renewed his lustful infatuations with a young mistress. Yet Henry's actions do suggest a small breach of the royal relationship, in the sense that Henry no longer did exactly as Anne demanded, or bothered trying to placate her. The ambassador makes note of a mysterious and unnamed woman whom Henry seemed particularly attached to. The young woman reportedly refused to pay deference to Anne, who then demanded her immediate dismissal. The ensuing quarrel resulting in Henry storming off and later forbidding Anne from dismissing the mistress. Crucially, he sent Anne a note rather than addressing her in person. 'The King has been very sad, and has sent [Anne] a message to this effect: that she ought to be satisfied with what he had done for her; for, were he to commence again, he would certainly not do as much; she ought to consider where she came from, and many other things of the same kind.'[145]

Chapuys did not dismiss Henry's affairs, but he believed that Anne was equipped to deal with Henry, and even had a certain skill for it.

He also thought it too soon to make any judgement on the state of their relationship because he distrusted Henry's 'fickle and capricious humour'.

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On 25 September 1534, Pope Clement died. Chapuys devotes only a few sentences, in his report of the death of the man who had utterly failed both Katherine and Henry for so many years, and even those are businesslike. Chapuys remarked that the news was sure to please Henry and Cromwell.[146] Without any further fanfare, he moves on to more interesting matters. Chapuys had little patience for Clement even

in death.

Instead Henry's domestic affairs caught the ambassador's attention. He noted that Thomas and George Boleyn were still in ascendency, serving Henry successfully and enjoying their political power. However, George had been involved in a dispute with Henry and a Howard cousin, Sir Francis Bryan.[147] George's wife Jane, however, who would become the scapegoat of the Boleyn sibling's fall, had not fared well at all. It would seem that Jane had attempted to intercede in the matter of Henry's mysterious mistress, but it had backfired and she had been dismissed from court.[148] The young mistress then made a bold move which signalled her allegiance, by writing to Mary, 'telling her to take good heart; that her tribulations will come to an end much sooner than she expected; and to be assured that, should the opportunity occur, she will show herself her true friend and devoted servant'.[149]

There is no evidence of such correspondence to Mary, and Chapuys could only say that he had heard the rumour. The story seems to evaporate; he makes no mention of it to Mary, nor does Mary mention it to him in her letters. It has been suggested that the mystery woman was in fact Jane Seymour, entering the stage a good many months before we have true reports of her, but it doesn't fit. Chapuys would have mentioned this previous incident in his description of Jane in 1536.

Anne's fear comes across to us with sharp clarity. For the woman who had held Henry's undivided attention for so many years his continuous affairs were an increasingly bitter pill to swallow.

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The fact that Katherine still lingered and refused to give up her title of queen, and that Mary was winning the hearts of the people, further fuelled Anne's insecurity. Chapuys wrote:

> The King's mistress [Anne] has been heard to say that she will never rest until he has had her [Katherine] put out of the way; and that since a prophecy exists that a queen of England is to be burnt alive, she is quite justified in trying to avert that fate from herself, and make the Queen play the part of the person doomed to the faggot.[150]

Chapuys believed that Anne's determination to privilege her daughter Elizabeth over Mary was to blame for Mary's treatment. 'I really believe, however, that all this ill-treatment of the Princess has principally originated in the hatred of the Lady Anne, and is carried on without the King's knowledge, who occasionally shows love and affection to his daughter.'[151]

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The ambassador continued to dip his toe into treasonous waters by

continuing his correspondence with Reginald Pole, and strongly pressing Charles to invade England, this time adding the voices of those who he hoped would add weight to the argument. He summarised Henry's position in England with military precision, making note of not only the mood of the English but of their Welsh neighbours, who he assured Charles would take up arms against Henry. He frequently met with Geoffrey Pole, Reginald's younger brother, who communicated with Charles via his ambassador, also assuring the Emperor that only a small force would be needed to overthrow the king. Charles remained immovable, however, and Chapuys had to content himself with seeing how the situation would unfold.

The visit of Philippe de Chabot, Admiral of France, in December 1534, however, proved to be significant. Henry put on a show for Chabot; Chapuys reported that he invited a gaggle of pretty young ladies to amuse the admiral, and ordered a public declaration that no one was to insult or attack him and his group on pain of death, nor were any men below the station of earl allowed near him. Henry and Anne had every cause to believe this meeting would be to both nations' satisfaction, and Chapuys was more or less resigned to the fact. Regardless, he paid his respects, as he always did, to the French embassy, and was rather surprised by Chabot's overly effusive greeting. The admiral seemed eager to strengthen ties with Charles rather than Henry, and begged Chapuys to visit him, regardless of the jealousy or suspicion it would arouse in the king. The ambassador noted that the admiral 'cared not a straw for them' [the English].[152]

Chapuys remained guarded despite Chabot's words, choosing to bide his time until after Henry's audience with the admiral, when he could gauge the nature of this visit – so far he assumed that Francis was putting forward a marriage proposal for his son and Elizabeth. When the purpose of the visit did finally emerge, no one was more pleased than the ambassador. Henry had already been informed by his ambassadors in France that his marriage to Anne was still not wholly accepted as lawful – there would forever be a line drawn under Elizabeth's legitimacy. Most of Europe remained under papal jurisdiction and Cranmer's smooth arguments in England held very little weight.

Francis was willing to consider a marriage between Mary and his son, as there was no question of her legitimacy or royal lineage, which was not at all what Anne and Henry wanted to hear. The royal couple no doubt hoped that Chabot could be swayed, and proceeded to hold masques and tournaments in his honour. Chabot's reaction to his hosts was alarmingly cool and uninterested. He did not attend any of the tennis matches which were held for him to watch, and in which Henry

himself played: an unmistakable snub.[153]

He only visited Anne and her ladies twice, and Chapuys noted that he did so when prodded by Henry. 'When the King at his first audience inquired if he did not wish to call on her, the Admiral answered very coolly "As you please," which answer was remarked by many of those present.'[154]

Chabot managed to tread on as many toes as he could, giving a clear message to Henry that a friendship with France was no longer reliant on Anne. Henry and Anne were left to decide the implications of this.

It was only before Chabot was due to depart that Chapuys, who had been lurking in the background surveying the landscape, finally called on him.

Chabot was surrounded by earnest courtiers, including Cromwell who was in the middle of presenting the admiral with a gift from Henry. Chapuys reported that the admiral made a show for Cromwell and the courtiers of being slightly displeased to see the ambassador. However, he immediately drew the ambassador away from prying ears and his manner changed to friendly.[155] Chabot lamented that Henry had shown him the Tower and other pretty sights, none of which had impressed the admiral, but had not shown him 'the most singular and valuable gem in all this kingdom, namely, the Princess Mary'.[156]

Chapuys did not take the bait. Instead, he slyly asked if Chabot had actually asked Henry for permission to see Mary, at which point some of Chabot's story unravelled. Chabot admitted that he had implied a wish to see her, but Henry had not got the message. Perhaps fearing his was losing his audience, Chabot proceeded to praise Mary, declaring that France was her faithful servant. Chapuys left it at that, not wishing to set too much store in the admiral's words personally, but they were used to great effect in letters to Mary and Katherine to bolster their spirits, even if the words rang a little hollow.[157]

Chapuys' account of the meeting also highlights the tension between the royal couple, which Chabot's behaviour fed.[158] Henry's behaviour during last night of feasting in the admiral's honour inadvertently reminded the court of his marital problems. Henry and Anne had been seated with Chabot, but Henry made an excuse to personally fetch Chabot's secretary and introduce him to the queen. The admiral and Anne had to make uneasy conversation, until the latter suddenly threw her head back and laughed, causing consternation among the French. Certainly Chabot, who seemed to be constantly on the lookout for reasons to be slighted, asked her in an annoyed tone whether she was mocking him. She assured the admiral that the source of her amusement was her husband, who had been immediately been distracted from his mission by a pretty young lady

who now captivated his attention; his wife and the admiral were forgotten.[159]

The meeting between Henry and Chabot was an undeniable flop; no one could have predicted such a cold response by Chabot, and Anne must have felt betrayed by the French, whose cause she had promoted.

Why had King Francis come out in support of Mary instead of Elizabeth? The French ambassador Du Bellay sheds light on Francis's thought process. Du Bellay's informants kept him abreast of the Chapuys' frequent meetings with merchants, networks which the French did not enjoy. The general consensus was that these merchants would surrender to Charles if an invasion occurred, as would several powerful nobles. It was better for Francis to support Mary's claim to prevent England (and the merchants) from falling into an alliance with Charles.

The Lübeckian and Hamburg merchants, part of the Hanseatic League, along with the Easterlings who so relied on Chapuys, had sailed with terrific fanfare up the Thames only weeks before Chabot's arrival. It is rare for Chapuys to report such trivial observations as attire, but this report was an exception. He admired the Lübeckian's dress, reporting that they wore red cloth with bands of yellow and white satin. On their sleeves was the motto '*Si Deus pro nobis, quis contra nos*', or in English, 'If God is for us, who can be against us'.[160]

The Hamburg merchants were decidedly more sedate. 'The Hamburghers are more modestly dressed, in black, with the following device: *Da pacem, domine, in diebus nostris* – "Give peace, O Lord, in the days of our life."'[161]

Chapuys could not discover their reason for coming, but it was clear that Henry had summoned them. The ambassador supposed that, with the threat of Imperial ports closing against the king, these merchants would be needed on side to ensure trade. It intrigued the ambassador, who also suggested that the entire spectacle was just that, designed to instil fear in the Flanders merchants, rivals who would be under Imperial orders to cease trade with England.[162]

Chapuys mentions a doctor in the merchant's retinue, who proved to his horror to be a devout Lutheran. The doctor gave a lengthy talk in Latin, apparently lasting three hours, in which he lambasted the Pope and praised Henry; there was nothing Henry liked more.[163]

It was clever of Henry to cultivate such relationships, and it was certainly a worrisome turn of events for Charles. Chapuys no doubt used his connections to glean from the merchants their true intentions. But now he pinned his hopes on a potential menace closer to home, a religious and political rebellion in Ireland heralded by the Earl of Kildare against Henry. Where Scotland had failed to ignite, Chapuys

hoped Ireland would pick up the torch.

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1535 would be one of the most dramatic and bloody years Chapuys had faced so far. We see a marked difference in Chapuys' despatches; his cynicism comes through, and his language is harsher.

After six years of fighting Henry and trying to protect Katherine and Mary's interests, Chapuys was no longer the cautious man who once stood before an impatient Henry in his first audience, and attempted to persuade the king to cleave to his wife. Henry, as far as Chapuys was concerned, was a hopeless case when it came to Katherine and Anne. However, he was increasingly agitated by Henry's refusal to allow Mary and Katherine see each other.[164] They had now been separated for three years, and Katherine had not been entirely well since her move to Kimbolton. Henry was becoming bolder under the guidance of Cromwell and the Boleyn family. The breach with Rome grew wider with every religious action against the Church that Henry sanctioned, such as the Suppression of Religious Houses Act, passed in February, and the increasing appointments of evangelical priests. Yet there was a glimmer of hope for conservatives in the appointment of Cardinal Farnese as Pope Paul III.

Within a few weeks, Paul had summoned Henry's ambassador in Rome, Gregory Casale, to discuss how Henry might be brought back to the fold. Henry would not surrender his newfound power over the English Church. However, as Tudor historian J. J. Scarisbrick wrote succinctly, he would not bargain; it was for the Pope to surrender to him – he was giving the papacy a second chance.[165]

Henry's actions had alienated members of his court. Various powerful nobles had already commenced treasonous correspondence with the Imperial ambassador. As early as 1534/1535, Chapuys was beginning his correspondence with Thomas Darcy, a baron of the North, who had become alarmed by the direction the Church was heading in, especially with Cromwell at the helm.

Darcy's New Year's gift of a fine sword to the ambassador on New Year's Day 1535 sent a clear message to Chapuys of Darcy's commitment to the Catholic cause. This had been preceded by a brief message and a gold forget-me-not flower brooch, the meaning of which Chapuys had no trouble deciphering.[166] Charles sanctioned Chapuys' encouragement of these conspirators, while flatly ruling out any intervention; he preferred to offer his mediation in reconciling Henry and the new Pope.

Conservative nobles were not the only faction to resent Anne's marriage. Anne has also alienated those nobles, who up to this point supported her marriage, including her own uncle, the Duke of Norfolk. In addition, Henry Percy, the Earl of Northumberland, who had

allegedly been Anne's paramour years prior, also joined the ranks of her opponents. Percy's physician had told the ambassador that his master was indignant at his treatment at the hands of Henry's government (though what treatment was not specified) and allegedly verbally abused Anne, complaining that she treated Norfolk worse than a dog. As to why Percy should care so deeply about a slight to Norfolk is not clear. But the duke was reported to have stormed out of his niece's chamber after being personally insulted, and 'began to complain in the bitterest terms of the said Royal mistress, bestowing on her the most opprobrious epithets, and calling her among other things "grande putain"'.[167]

Chapuys and the duke had not been on good terms for some time but, with cracks appearing in the united Howard front, the ambassador saw a faint opportunity. Chapuys was invited to an impromptu and informal meeting with Norfolk and the treasurer William Fitzwilliam, in the shipyards beyond the Tower – what is now St Katherine's Docks. It was an odd choice of venue, and the ambassador felt he was immediately on the back foot as the two men showed him Henry's newest warships, making a point of saying,

> What a fine thing it is for a king of England to possess two such ships as these, with which to intimidate those who might make war on him, all the time extolling beyond measure the size, structure, and armament of the said ships, as if he meant to say that with those two, and four or five more at anchor, the King could fight against all the world.[168]

The men insinuated that it was a shame Charles, who was presently still dealing with the plundering of Imperial cities by Suleiman's Captain Barbarossa, did not own such ships. Chapuys' cold replies to the taunts were merely that God would aid his master; Norfolk's equally cold retort was that the ambassador should not trust too much to fortune, a lesson he himself would soon heed. Up to this point the entire meeting appears to be a wholly superfluous muscle-flexing operation. Perhaps the ambassador had hoped that, like Darcy, the duke could be brought over to the Imperial cause, alienated by his kin; if this is the case, it was a foolhardy hope. Norfolk eventually changed the subject and, with absolute insincerity, spoke of a renewal of friendship between Charles and Henry, but it was too little too late, and the ambassador kept him at arm's length. Unless Mary and Katherine were treated better, Norfolk could simper all he liked, matters would remain as they were.[169] The meeting had resolved nothing, but its true purpose was only revealed as Chapuys took his leave. Norfolk casually enquired why Charles had received Irish ambassadors from the Earl of Kildare, who was a declared enemy of the king's, and, even worse, why Charles had supplied the earl with

ammunition and soldiers.

> I answered that I saw nothing remarkable in that; Your Majesty might have sent someone to Ireland on business of the Spaniards fishing on that coast; had they suspected in the least that there was foul play in it, the King's ambassador might have complained thereof, and Your Majesty attended to their remonstrances, whereas nothing of the sort had been done.[170]

The ambassador correctly read the threat in Norfolk's words, and this was confirmed only a few weeks later, in an audience with Henry, who escalated the muscle flexing. Henry spoke of his improvements to fortifications on the coast, and in particular the castle at Dover, but he also boasted that his new ships far outstripped that of Charles's fleet, and would have a hundred tiers of oars as opposed to Charles's paltry twenty-seven. Henry should have remembered to whom he was boasting, and Chapuys immediately leapt on the statement, asking for details. How many oars to each bench? What was the overall weight of the ship?[171]

Henry hadn't quite thought through his assertions: 'When I asked him as to the number of oars each bench would carry, he answered "one in each" very obstinately affirming that in each galley, there could only be one oar for each bench, so that, this time at least, the King's assertion was founded on a paradox.'[172]

Henry's blunder aside, the ambassador had inferred from the audiences with Henry at court and Norfolk in the shipyard that the king was preparing for an invasion.

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By 1535, Katherine and Anne's mutual animosity was nothing to that of Anne and Mary's. It was understandable that the young woman increasingly occupied Anne's thoughts; Katherine was not a rival for Henry's affection, but Mary still held a place in his heart. Katherine was an aging woman locked away, Mary was a young and dangerous banner to which many began to flock. Chapuys wrote to de Granvelle in March, concerned by a rumour that Anne was now prophesying she would not conceive a child while Mary and Katherine lived.[173]

It was enough of a warning for the ambassador to consider an uncharacteristically dangerous plan: getting Mary out of England. Such a plan of course needed Imperial approval. Chapuys wrote two sets of letters, one of which was smuggled to Mary, and the other to Charles.[174] Katherine was not consulted at this stage; the ambassador knew she would never approve. Katherine and her ambassador had two very different mindsets: Katherine was preparing for her final judgement and was more than willing to share her martyrdom with her daughter, Chapuys on the other hand would do anything to keep Mary alive and part of the succession. Both Charles and Mary were

enthusiastic, and Chapuys began to craft a plan.[175]

Chapuys' letter had improved Mary's spirits tenfold; she now wrote to the ambassador constantly – she was a teenage girl excited about the prospect of a daring escape. Her admiration for her ambassador, and at this point potential saviour, is evident; he was one of the few she could trust and had her welfare at heart, perhaps even more so than Katherine. Without his advice, he recounted, she declared that she would be lost.[176]

Anne's behaviour strengthened his determination. His letter to Charles reported that Anne was more aggressive, perhaps lashing out in her insecurity. He wrote that Anne had made a point of publicly declaring to Henry that, far from her being indebted to him,

> he is as much indebted to her as ever man was to woman, for she has been the cause of his being cleansed from the sin in which he was living; and, moreover, that by marrying her as he had done, he had become the richest monarch that ever was in England, inasmuch as without her he would never have been able to reform the affairs of the Church in his kingdom, to his very great personal profit and that of his kingdom.[177]

Bold words indeed.

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Henry's determination to enforce the Act of Succession took a dangerous and bloody turn in 1535. The Act, which had come into effect the same day Clement handed down his sentence the year before, did not include the death penalty, but a few neat revisions now remedied that. Henry had also introduced the Act of Treason which declared that any who spoke or wrote against Henry's marriage to Anne, or against his title of Supreme Head of the Church, as well as any who called Henry a heretic would be hanged, drawn and quartered.[178] The first victims of these new acts were chosen carefully, and with an eye to driving home the point to Katherine and Charles: Bishop Fisher and Thomas More. Henry also decided to punish the Carthusians, one of the holiest orders in England, and currently the most disobedient.

Chapuys had heard Henry berate both Thomas Boleyn and Norfolk for not taking stronger measures against a Carthusian monk who had preached a sermon criticising him.[179] Four Carthusians felt the full force of Henry's new laws in May. Chapuys wrote an account of their execution, including their being dragged through the streets from the Tower to Tyburn. The ambassador does not give the gory details, but we know they were hanged, cut down alive, disembowelled and beheaded.

Chapuys could only report, somewhat shaken, that it had been

> for no other cause than their having said and maintained that

> the Pope was the true chief and sovereign of the universal Christian Church, and that, according to God, reason, and conscience, it did not appertain to this King to usurp the sovereignty of the Church and supremacy over the English clergy.[180]

There was one other detail which Chapuys felt obliged to include, clearly showing his distaste for what he saw as the English penchant for blood and violence. According to the ambassador, Thomas and George Boleyn, Henry's illegitimate son Henry Fitzroy, Norfolk, Henry Norris and other nobles were present for the execution of the Carthusians. He also recounts a peculiar detail, namely that the men wore masks and were 'dressed and mounted as if he were going on an expedition to the Scotch borders'.[181]

A month later, Bishop Fisher, imprisoned the previous year for refusing to swear the Oath of Succession, was sentenced to be beheaded. Like More, Fisher was willing to swear allegiance to children by Henry and Anne, but refused to repudiate papal supremacy over the English Church. Pope Paul formally made Fisher a cardinal, wrongly assuming that Henry would hardly dare to execute him. He was the second pope to underestimate Henry.

> As soon as this King heard that the bishop of Rochester had been created cardinal, he was so angry and indignant at it that he said to many who were present at the time, that he would soon give him another and better hat, for he would send the Bishop's head to Rome for that purpose.[182]

In a fit of rage, Henry sent his council to the Tower to threaten both More and Fisher, insisting that they finally sign the Act of Succession, to which both refused. Henry felt personally betrayed by his lifelong friend More. Such was Henry's nature that execution wasn't enough to assuage him; he needed to destroy their reputations and be seen to be the injured party – this was a trait Chapuys understood well in the English monarch. Henry immediately ordered sermons to be preached, denouncing both men as traitors. As was the pattern with Henry, whenever he was confronted by those who refused to see his religious vision or allow him to be free of Katherine's lingering ghost, he clung to Anne, one of the few with whom he could truly share it. Chapuys reported that 'The King loves his mistress now more than ever he did.'[183]

A meeting between Francis and Henry at Calais had been on the cards for some time. Originally Henry and Anne planned to go, but it had been postponed while Anne was pregnant. In 1535 Henry chose to send his deputies, including George Boleyn, whose diplomatic and linguistic skills were highly regarded. George arrived back in England several weeks later, but headed straight for his sister's rooms before

seeing the king; this, Chapuys assumed, meant the news was anything but what Anne had hoped for. What Anne and George spoke of even Chapuys could not discover, but he did notice a marked antipathy towards the French ambassador and Francis at court following George's return.[184]

Eventually George had to present his news to Henry, and the Privy Council remained sitting for two days. Francis had once more refused a marriage contract between his son and Elizabeth. Henry had clearly hoped Chabot had persuaded his master that Mary should be ruled out, but the admiral had done nothing of the sort. Henry took his rage out on Francis's representative, as he so often did with the foreign ambassadors at his court, but this time Henry and Anne were deeply wounded; Charles could be relied on to thwart Henry, but France had supported the second marriage. France had proven a fair-weather friend indeed to the Boleyns. Dinteville was not invited to court, and Cromwell told Chapuys in confidence that the French ambassador had tried to visit him in Stepney, waiting until 10 p.m. When the irate chancellor arrived home, the last person he wanted to see was the French ambassador, and a few choice words sent Dinteville packing, 'sad and dejected'.[185]

This incident occurs in a lengthy report by Chapuys of an illuminating evening with Cromwell. The letter is a classic example of Chapuys' haphazard style when particularly anxious or excited. His recount of the evening with Cromwell is interrupted by a recount of a past incident with Henry that tied in with his current report; he abruptly leaves the subject of his meeting with Cromwell to inform Charles that Henry's taxation of the clergy and other monasteries and abbeys (which would be stepped up a gear under Cromwell's ruthless vision) was beginning to refill his coffers. For the sake of a comprehensive summary, I have kept the two subjects grouped together.

The most striking aspect of the informal evening in Stepney was the interesting piece of subterfuge Cromwell attempted. Chapuys was not to be apprised of the true result of the Calais meeting; instead, Cromwell showed him an unsigned and unsealed document in which Francis allegedly declared his support once more of Henry's marriage to Anne.[186] Chapuys was amusedly sceptical, doubting the authenticity of the document. He believed that it had been written as a declaration that Henry expected Francis to sign, which would fit in with the timeline of Chabot's visit and his startling declaration that Francis wanted Mary over Elizabeth. If Chapuys was correct, Henry was testing Francis, and the fact that it remained unsigned was evidence that Francis had failed. Chapuys had also heard that, upon Chabot's return to France, he confirmed not only Francis's choice of marriage

proposal, but the instigator, Charles V.[187]

This was perhaps the moment when Cromwell switched horses. With Charles, Henry at least knew where he stood; he knew what was required for an alliance. Francis had proven too capricious and mercurial. Cromwell tested the waters with the ambassador, suggesting that, despite the French offers, he was looking towards an Imperial alliance once more. France was only useful to validate Elizabeth's legitimacy and Anne's marriage. If they did neither, there was no advantage to an alliance. However, it also presented the reality of Henry's situation: if France wasn't willing to support Anne and her daughter, who would? Cromwell also informed Chapuys that in Calais the French had tried in earnest to procure Henry's participation in a war against Charles. Chapuys made no mention of it in his despatch to the Emperor, of course, but he confided to de Granvelle that he suspected Henry was letting the rumour float at court, regardless of its veracity, to put pressure on the Imperial embassy.[188]

Cromwell also admitted that he had conspired to keep George from attending the meeting in Calais until matters reached a suitable conclusion, and was adamant that he be kept from any further missions to France for the pursuit of an alliance. Cromwell was being surprisingly candid, and the exchange illuminates several key factors. The 1535 mission was George's last, Cromwell made it clear that George was good at his job – too good, for Cromwell now pursued an Imperial relationship, and feared George might successfully mend relations with France.[189]

However, the order to keep George away from France came from Henry himself, which for Anne was even more of a betrayal. Henry publicly told Chapuys within days of his evening with Cromwell that he expected a reconciliation with Charles, and had ordered that George be detained until he could be sure.

The ambassador was thrilled with the direction that matters had suddenly taken. He could not help smugly reminding Cromwell of Thomas Boleyn's failed mission to Bologna in Chapuys' first year as ambassador. Henry had recklessly declared then that, if Charles sided with Henry at the meeting, he would willingly become his slave and, even worse, devote a considerable part of his fortune to the service of God.[190] Henry had loftily assured various embassies that all the money he was redirecting from the clergy would go towards a holy crusade to Jerusalem and other pious purposes. Considering Henry had not seriously attempted either path, Chapuys wasn't going to hold his breath, but he agreed with Henry's statement that he was geographically too remote to attempt a crusade.

Cromwell was also rather unguarded respecting Henry's financial situation, and Chapuys' account is more or less spot on:

> He said that the King had lately become so fond of hoarding, that, exclusive of several other means he has in his power of increasing his treasure, and having nothing to spend his money upon, all the gold and silver of England will ultimately fall into his hands, to the great injury of private individuals.[191]

Without doubt the most important news from Calais was that the conference had ended, without anything having been achieved. The ambassador was pleased, but certain events quickly tempered his delight.

One was the execution on 22 June of Henry's old critic and ally of Rome, Bishop Fisher, beheaded on Tower Hill for refusing to swear an oath to the Act of Succession and thus committing treason. What Henry could not know was that Fisher had previously committed treason by conspiring with Chapuys to encourage an Imperial invasion of England. He had been sentenced to the typical traitor's death of being hanged, drawn and quartered, but Henry commuted this to beheading.

Fisher's death was felt keenly by Katherine and Chapuys, both of whom had admired the bishop's tireless defence of Henry's first marriage. He believed that, had Pope Paul not made Fisher a cardinal, he would still be alive in the Tower.[192]

Chapuys' letter to de Granvelle, recounting Henry's behaviour during the executions of the Carthusians and Fisher, might seem somewhat sensationalist, but it is corroborated by the French ambassador, who was also dismayed by the macabre festivities during the months of executions. A pageant based on the Book of Revelation was held on 23 June, a day after Fisher's death, at which a play was held, depicting the executions of the clergy.[193] Henry was by himself, and apparently drank and enjoyed the festivities, even going so far as to sit bareheaded without a crown.[194] Chapuys reported that the next morning Henry sent a message to Anne, enthusiastically inviting her to witness the pageant when it was performed a week later. Henry was desperate for his people to side with him, and this pageant is an interesting accompanying piece to the farce of sending the cardinal to hell, a play put on to celebrate Wolsey's death years before.[195]

It was now Thomas More's turn. Charged like Fisher with high treason for denying the validity of the Act of Succession, he was tried on 1 July 1535 before a panel of judges, which included Thomas and George Boleyn, Thomas Audley and the Duke of Norfolk. They took less than fifteen minutes to find More guilty and condemn him to execution by the axe. More, who had sent so many 'heretics' to die for their beliefs, now died for his. Henry had proved to his court and to himself that no one was indispensable.

Within weeks Chapuys was letting it be known that he would leave

England briefly on business. It was a smokescreen: he was preparing a plan for Mary's escape from England.

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Like the rest of Europe, Chapuys' focus was on Charles's military exploits. On 1 June, the Emperor sailed at the head of an impressive fleet of 400 ships and over 30,000 soldiers to reconquer the kingdom of Tunis from the Ottomans. It was a crushing defeat of Barbarossa, the sultan's chief naval commander.[196] The victory had a ripple effect, which reached England and France, to the ambassador's satisfaction. It was a small stepping stone towards Anne's downfall. As Charles had suspected years prior, the French were colluding with the Ottoman Turks and had been supplying them with ammunition. The fleur-de-lys mark on hundreds of cannonballs was something of a giveaway.

The ambassador received a lengthy and victorious despatch from the Emperor, and immediately sent a message to Henry to inform him of Charles's impressive feat. A victory was not what Henry had wished for in the slightest, but he made quite a show of being deliriously joyful, and gave Chapuys' servant eight ducats as a reward.[197] Chapuys idly wondered how many more ducats he would have received if Charles had been defeated, but Henry's pique is understandable.[198] Charles was nine years his junior, and could boast an empire spanning southern Italy, Sicily, Spain, the Americas, Austria, the Netherlands, what we would now call Belgium, and lands in Germany. The victory had tremendous repercussions for King Francis, whom Charles now forced into a formal alliance, a punishment for colluding with the Turks.[199] It was disastrous news for Henry, who relied on a French alliance. If Chapuys' letter to de Granvelle was not exaggerating, Anne, Cromwell and Henry were shocked by the turn of events.[200] Chapuys' odd analogy was that they were as astonished and displeased as dogs falling out of a window (which indeed would be displeasing to any animal or person). His last comment, that Cromwell himself could scarcely breathe when he first heard of the victory, is particularly enlightening. For Cromwell it was becoming clearer that France was on the back foot, and England had no use for an alliance with a weak party.[201]

One of Henry's reactions was to indulge in a series of mind games with the French ambassador, insinuating that Henry and Charles were close, and had been corresponding regularly. While dining at Chapuys' house, the French ambassador again unburdened himself, complaining that Cromwell had continued to refuse to see him. Dinteville had retaliated by sending a sharp and indignant message to Cromwell, declaring that he would no longer 'honour' the latter with his visits. The ambassador was quick to allay his concerns, assuring him that Charles and Henry were enjoying no such relationship; in fact, it was

business as usual.[202]

Chapuys had of course hoped that Charles's victory would see a marked difference in Katherine and Mary's treatment, but it changed nothing. Incensed once more, he took the chance to encourage the Emperor, who he hoped was still in a state of bloodlust, to commence hostilities – if Charles could despatch the Ottoman fleet, surely defeating England would pose no problem.[203] Chapuys was again stirring the pot and Katherine's utter disillusionment with the new Pope spurred him on. Incensed, she wrote to her nephew and Pope Paul, complaining that she 'knows not whose fault is the greater, whether that of the King who, with unparalleled cruelty, sends these holy people to martyrdom, or of him [the Pope] who applies no remedy to the evil the Devil is sowing in this kingdom'.[204]

Martyrdom was now constantly on her mind; it would be a fittingly fiery end to her reign. Katherine knew she could expect nothing from the Pope; she was preparing for her execution, and that of her daughter. However, Mary and Chapuys were focused on survival.[205] The French ambassador Jean du Bellay expressed the view that Chapuys himself had always held and pressed on Charles. 'The English people are so devoted to Katherine and Mary that they will join any prince who espouses their quarrel. This is the common opinion among the noblemen, the commons, and the king's own servants.'[206]

None of Henry's visions had come to fruition; his first wife still held the hearts and minds of the English people, and the battle to validate his second marriage was an uphill struggle, but there was hope, and Henry placed all of it on Anne's latest pregnancy.

Around the Throne the Thunder Rolls

> Venere idus, sed nondum prœterire*, the days have commenced, but have not yet ended.*
>
> Chapuys, 1536

1536 presented several unforeseen crises. The court had engaged in the usual Christmas festivities, but there was an air of uncertainty to proceedings. Charles's victory in Tunis was compounded with the French embassy's quarrel with Henry and Cromwell.

For Katherine, however, the days were drawing to a close. She had again fallen ill in December, and her steward and physician both wrote to Chapuys asking that he visit, as she was getting worse by the hour. The ambassador asked Cromwell for permission to visit her, but he was delayed a day as Henry wanted to see him before his departure. The informal audience only irritated him further. Chapuys was greeted with a bear hug from the delighted king, who had heard Katherine was on her deathbed and could hardly contain his excitement.[1] With Katherine out of the way, Henry was confident that Anglo–Imperial relations would improve. Chapuys didn't necessarily agree.

Finally allowed to see Katherine, Chapuys braved the bitter English weather at the beginning of January to visit her at Kimbolton, accompanied by Stephen Vaughan, a friend and confidant of Cromwell's and a talented diplomat. Chapuys was shocked by the change in Katherine. He saw a woman who had given up the fight, who had finally lost faith in all those around her, even her nephew and the Pope, to whom she had clung. Their first meeting was conducted in Spanish, and Katherine thanked him for his years of loyal service, while he tried to rally her spirits.[2]

Over the next three days, Chapuys continued trying to rekindle the fire within her, but in the end he could only sit with her in the afternoons, his hope rising as she regained some of her strength. It is a touching scene between old friends, rather than that of a monarch and her ambassador. The pair had some of the most frank conversations of their entire relationship. It was to Chapuys alone that Katherine confided her fears: was she to blame for the deaths of More and Fisher because they had followed her? Was she also to blame for the religious turmoil that engulfed her people? Chapuys could only assure her of her innocence, but her doubts were valid.

The English Reformation was as much on Katherine's shoulders as Henry's. Her devotion to Henry, and determination not to step aside quietly because Henry was infatuated with someone else, may appear to many as misguided, but to Katherine it was quite simple. From childhood her destiny had been to be Queen of England; no

infatuation could take that away from her.[3]

After three days Chapuys felt he could leave her, believing her to be on the mend. He bid farewell to Katherine on the morning of the 5th. Two days later, while he was en route to London, Katherine at last gave up, dying far away from her daughter, her husband and the people whom she had considered it her duty to serve. Her last prayers were for the husband who had long deserted her. It was a quiet end to a battle-hardened life.

When Chapuys arrived in London on the 9th and heard the news, he immediately went to court, perhaps expecting to witness a quiet and reflective mood there. Instead, Henry and Anne were almost indecently overjoyed.[4] Katherine had haunted their marriage since its inception; despite their insistence that Katherine was inconsequential to their future, she had always been there in the shadows, but now Anne truly was the undisputed queen. No one could have known then that it was Katherine who had kept her secure.

This, then, was the scene to which Chapuys, utterly distraught, returned. Henry had roared happily at court,

> Thank God, we are now free from any fear of war, and the time has come for dealing with the French much more to our advantage than heretofore, for if they once suspect my becoming the Emperor's friend and ally now that the real cause of our enmity no longer exists I shall be able to do anything I like with them.[5]

Henry planned jousts and masques and, according to the ambassador's informants, dressed in yellow. It has been thought that in the past the yellow was to mock Charles and Katherine as it was supposedly the official colour of mourning in Spain, but this has been disproved. It was intended as a symbol of rebirth and of new beginnings.[6] The reference in his letter to the yellow garb appears in a report weeks after the fact, and it is evident that Chapuys arrived at court the day after the incident. Reports are garbled: Chapuys only mentions Henry as wearing the colour, but other accounts describe the royal couple wearing yellow, and further accounts only mention Anne. To add insult to injury, Henry paraded his daughter Elizabeth throughout the court.[7] Chapuys could see that for the Boleyns it was truly a day of celebration, and reported that George and Thomas 'must have said to themselves, what a pity it was that the Princess had not kept her mother company'.[8] This report has become misconstrued as Chapuys quoting Thomas and George, whereas he is merely surmising their reaction. They are Chapuys' words.

As well as seeing the court in this merry state, Chapuys was battling a sense of personal guilt that he should have been present for Katherine's passing. Chapuys' 9 January despatch to Charles is

emotionally charged, and perhaps one of the most moving and sincere laments for the death of a Queen of England. 'If it should please god to take her to Himself, it would at least be a consolation to die as it were in my arms, and not all alone like a beast.'[9]

His letter to Pedro Ortiz was even more emotionally unguarded. He was not in good health and was 'in such agony of mind that he does not know where and how to begin, and express the immense misfortune and evil which has befallen him, and all those who loved and respected the Queen'.[10]

It seems the entire spectacle at court was too much for Chapuys to handle. His grief, guilt and pain transformed into anger and suspicion. Every unguarded word Henry had uttered in the past about the convenience of Katherine's demise, every cruel gesture from Henry and Anne towards Mary took on even more sinister meaning for Chapuys. He was utterly convinced that Henry had murdered his first wife, and saw the hasty burial as further proof of Henry's guilt.[11] Chapuys' claims cannot be substantiated, although there have been historians who have deemed it plausible.[12] Within eight hours of her death, Henry ordered the inspection of her body without appointing a physician. A servant who was also a wax candlemaker, hardly a qualified surgeon, performed the autopsy but Chapuys reported that he had some experience. The result was disturbing for the men: all of Katherine's organs were healthy, except for her heart, which was reportedly black from the inside out.[13] The servant immediately suspected poison, and the rumour soon found its way to Chapuys.

Convinced of foul play, the ambassador systematically eliminated suspects in his own private line of enquiry. After some thought, Henry was dismissed, as, despite his relief, Katherine's death didn't improve his relations with Charles. Cromwell was also eliminated as he had often declared that the removal of Mary would strengthen Anglo–Imperial relations, so his target would not have been Katherine.[14]

In the complex plot developing in Chapuys' mind, the guilt lay with Anne, the only person who he felt could truly benefit. Anne's malice towards Katherine is well documented; she feared Katherine and her influence, but this, in Chapuys' mind, was not the motive. Henry had had a string of affairs from 1534 onwards; Anne was no longer his infatuation, and she felt increasingly vulnerable. Henry's love was what she had to depend on; his love kept the wolves at bay. It made sense to the ambassador that Anne should be the culprit. Curiously, Katherine's hasty and surreptitious burial suggested to Chapuys that Henry wondered himself whether Anne had poisoned Katherine, and had attempted to protect his pregnant wife by ordering a quick burial. In his emotional state, Chapuys was not thinking clearly. He had forgotten that Katherine, acting on his advice, had

only eaten food prepared for her by her own Spanish servants in her own chamber, making poison very hard to administer.[15]

Had Henry, Cromwell or Anne truly wished to remove Mary and Katherine, Mary would have been the more tactical choice. Although he omitted the suspect from his letter to Charles, he confided to de Granvelle that he suspected Henry's ambassador in Italy. Gregory Casale sent poison in small increments.[16] It is an interesting hypothesis, as Casale was somewhat out of favour at the English court, and was currently kicking his heels in Bologna. Could he have poisoned Katherine to gain favour with Anne? Some at court thought it credible, and certainly Henry's frequent payments to Casale of eight ducats a day, which seemed to be separate from his usual wages, make it more plausible. However, Chapuys still believed it to be highly improbable and, more than anything else, rather clumsy.[17]

Katherine's death was a catalyst for all those concerned. With her death, something in the ambassador had snapped. One of the greatest women he had known was dead, and he thought himself to be the only person in England apart from Mary who cared. He now referred to Anne more frequently as 'the concubine', interspersed with his usual address of 'The Lady Anne', and he now had a vested interest in Henry's wandering eye.[18]

Chapuys now no longer suspected poison, but he now blamed his master, who had consistently promised his aunt that he would assist her, and had failed. His unguarded letters to both de Granvelle and Charles speak of Katherine's death as being caused by despondency and grief, but Charles could make it up to her, if he would only invade England.[19] Charles showed a very small degree of patience for the old and tired request, and it was left to de Granvelle to reprimand his old friend for his pushy letters. Chapuys could only bite his tongue and thank de Granvelle, assuring him that he would 'not be so disobedient hereafter'.[20]

It was a sharp reminder that Chapuys had very few friends. Even those he considered as confidants answered to a higher power and served a higher agenda. Mary received news of her mother's death from an entirely detached source in Elizabeth's household, and had no opportunity to grieve. Chapuys once more turned his attention to bundling Mary out of England, but surprisingly abandoned the plan, deciding that the moment had passed. Mary tried to assist him, and suggested that she enter a convent from where she could slip away. The ambassador immediately advised her against it, declaring the plan to be 'fantastic'.[21] Henry was already engaged in ejecting nuns and monks from convents and monasteries, and would not allow it. Instead, Chapuys began to see Katherine's death as an opportunity. Mary was still an important pawn to be played, and both the Holy

Roman Emperor and Francis had proven that she was valuable as the only undisputed heir. Better, then, to keep her where she could be brought into play.

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Katherine was denied a royal burial at Westminster Abbey. Instead Chapuys reported that she was buried quietly with little ceremony in Peterborough Cathedral. An emotional ambassador described the funeral:

> Such have been the wonderful display and incredible magnificence which these people gave me to understand would be lavished in honour and memory of one whose great virtues and royal relationship certainly entitled her to uncommon honours. Perhaps one of these days they will repair their fault, and erect a suitable monument or institute some pious foundation to her memory in some suitable spot or other.[22]

The more superstitious courtiers felt Katherine had delivered a final blow from beyond the grave, for Anne miscarried on the same day as the funeral.[23] Chapuys' report of the miscarriage is clinical, businesslike, as are many of his despatches, and gives us a vital perspective on the tragedy.

The day of Anne's miscarriage, 25 January, began with one of Henry's celebratory jousts, in which he was violently thrown from his horse.[24] Chapuys expressed his amazement that Henry hadn't died, as he was by this time a heavy man and, coupled with the weight of his armour, fell heavily from his gigantic charger. Chapuys wondered, since Henry had narrowly escaped death, what greater misfortune was reserved for him.

At the news of Anne's miscarriage, Henry, who was still recovering from his accident, was reportedly furious. Yet Chapuys only speaks of his disappointment and, like any parent, sorrow. In her terror of having again failed to carry a child to term, Anne lashed out at her uncle – who had brought the pregnant Anne the news that Henry was near death with his usual lack of sensitivity – saying that he had caused the miscarriage.[25] Henry seemed unconvinced, and Chapuys refuted the claim, stating that it had been announced to her (not by Norfolk) gently, so as not to cause alarm, and that she seemed indifferent to the news.[26] The rumours at court varied, but what seemed to be agreed on was Anne's inability to bear an heir.

Had the blow from the jousting accident caused such a massive shift in personality? The evidence is convoluted but there were certainly several contributing factors. Anne's latest miscarriage had also caused Henry to question everything: his faith, his divinity and of course Anne herself. The accident drove home his mortality and his age, and caused him to look at the achievements of his reign. For

Chapuys, who had made it his business to observe Henry and scrutinise his every thought and action, the writing was on the wall. He had witnessed a steady change in personality and an increasingly autocratic manner since the previous year, perhaps even since late 1534. Even in his recount of the accident, Chapuys referred to Henry as a tyrant.[27]

Anne's latest miscarriage was constantly and publicly speculated upon. Chapuys now believed that she had a defective constitution, but others at court looked to Henry's blossoming romance with a lady-in-waiting, Jane Seymour. Henry was again seducing a lady under his wife's nose, which he had considerable experience of doing, and Anne now suffered the same fear as her predecessor. Chapuys reported a distinct coldness between Henry and Anne; he hardly spent time with her and, when she miscarried, had darkly declared, 'I see that God will not give me male children.'[28]

Chapuys reported that Henry had left Anne at Greenwich, telling her 'with ill grace' that he would speak to her when she recovered. Henry never liked to be held responsible for any misdeed, and his wife had chosen to blame him. It was his fault, she had declared – seeing him love another woman, meaning Jane, had left her broken-hearted.[29]

Henry showed increased warmth towards his eldest daughter, sending her 100 crowns and ordering that she be moved to a better residence, which was incidentally much further inland, making escape impossible.[30] For her journey Henry also gave her 100 crowns to distribute as alms. Had Anne carried the child to term, Chapuys was under no illusion that Mary would be in a very different situation.

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In early February, Cranmer gave a lengthy sermon on the subject of the royal supremacy to the congregation at St Paul's Cathedral.[31] Chapuys is one of our main sources for the event and, keeping in mind his vehement hatred of the archbishop, we must presume some bias. Cranmer's tone was significantly more venomous and heated than we have come to expect from the mild-mannered archbishop. Pope Paul was the Antichrist and Henry was the true head of the Church.[32] Chapuys reported that the rest of the prelates would echo these sentiments over the weeks to come.

The ambassador communicated his concern that Katherine's death had done nothing to mend Henry's relationship with the Pope, and that he did not show any interest in rejoining the flock. As the months went by without Charles's intervention, Chapuys insisted that Henry would become more intractable.

> It will be a fit thing for you to do to try and bring him back to the obedience of the Church, and help his reconciliation with

> the Pope, using such language and reasoning as you may deem most fit, putting before him the danger to his conscience, the division, schism, and confusion likely to distract his kingdom, and the manifest peril in which he himself is.[33]

Charles wisely instructed his ambassador to mediate privately between Pope Paul and Henry on his behalf in order to quietly reach a solution. The list of terms Chapuys received from his master was not only lengthy but, in parts, contradictory.

Charles stressed that Chapuys must approach the matter as if the ideas were his own – a common ploy among ambassadors, even Cromwell, in dealing with monarchs – rather than raise the king's hackles by implying Charles's 'interference'.[34] Charles was determined to restore Anglo–Imperial relations, and it fell on Chapuys to promote an alliance without sacrificing Mary. It was another precarious situation, fraught with religious and political complications, and to an extent Anne complicated the issue as far as Mary's rights were concerned.[35] Charles could in no way agree to anything that traduced Katherine's memory or Mary's legitimacy; this was, in modern parlance, a deal-breaker. Thus Chapuys' hands were tied; he had very little to work with. Mary had seen some improvement to her life but Henry showed no signs of restoring her to the succession. His coolness towards Anne and possible desire to remarry only drove the point home that Henry still desperately wanted an heir. Yet Charles would offer no opposition to a new marriage, provided the choice of bride suited his interests.

Provided that decent provision was made for Mary, the problem of Anne Boleyn might be solved. On 23 February 1536, Chapuys visited Cromwell and was amused by the latter's overly friendly and informal tone.[36] Cromwell obsequiously assured Chapuys that he could acquire 'immortal fame and glory' by successfully negotiating an Anglo–Imperial alliance.[37] Anne was not only struggling to rekindle her marriage with Henry, she and Cromwell had also fallen out, and Chapuys was determined to take advantage of the rift. It suited him to appear to be manipulated by Cromwell, whose frequent visits to Chapuys were obvious tactics to ingratiate himself politically with the Imperial camp.[38]

Cromwell added that should Henry choose a new wife, she would not be French. The suggestion was that if Henry did remarry, it would suit Charles's interests, not Francis's.[39] De Granvelle wrote that Cromwell said nothing except what Chapuys drew from him.[40] Cromwell frequently called on his ambassadorial neighbour as the rumours of a rift between him and Anne gained momentum.

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The ambassador's 1 April despatch is perhaps one of his most

interesting reports to Charles regarding the relationship between Anne and Cromwell. The original is no longer in Vienna nor is it found in the Brussels archives, but the editor of the Spanish Calendar, Pascal Gayangos, evidently translated both the letter to Charles and the shorter summary to de Granvelle. Chapuys held a supper at his house in April for the conservative faction. The guests included Henry Grey, son-in-law of the Duke of Suffolk and great-grandson of Elizabeth Woodville and Edward IV; Henry Pole, brother of Reginald; and Elizabeth Grey, the Dowager Countess of Kildare.[41] The topics of discussion were Henry's possible new marriage, and the rumour of a rift between Cromwell and Anne was confirmed. Chapuys was able to divulge his own rumour from the Imperial ambassador in France, that Henry had secretly asked for the hand of Francis's daughter.[42] The ambassador however was sceptical, and visited Cromwell the next day to confirm the rumour.[43] The following account of their meeting following the dinner is interesting in that it details not only expressions and gestures, but even where the men stood as they spoke. We see Cromwell in action, while the ambassador considered his words.[44] The ambassador observed that Cromwell's manner was cold and indifferent when he said: 'Although the King, his master, was still inclined to pay court to ladies, yet it was generally believed that in the future he would lead a more moral life than hitherto – a chastened marital one with his present Queen.'[45] Yet Cromwell then moved away and leant against the window, looking out and covering a smile with his hand.[46]

Was Cromwell truly sharing a joke with Chapuys at Henry's expense, or, more likely, gaining Chapuys' trust by sharing an honest moment? Chapuys then made a surprising admission:

> The love and affection I bore the King, and him in particular, as well as my earnest desire for the peace, honour, and prosperity of England, made me wish that he should have another royal mistress, not out of hatred of Anne Boleyn, for she had never done me any harm, but for his own sake.[47]

Chapuys' language when referring to Anne was noticeably different. His vehement language had mellowed to a degree; for the moment it was not personal, it was business. Katherine was now dead, Anne's position was tenuous and Mary seemed to be in a stronger position.

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The English Reformation was well underway, with Henry's suppression of the monasteries, and Cromwell at the helm. More than 300 religious houses were stripped of their wealth, resulting in a revenue which Chapuys estimated would likely exceed 120,000 ducats, as well as silver plate, chalices and other items.[48] The rift

between Anne and Henry's first minister was apparently due to Cromwell's use of the funds, which Anne vehemently disagreed with. Again she had misjudged Henry, who was more than happy placing his trust in Cromwell's vision. The ambassador's spies also kept him informed of the latest religious changes made by Cranmer and his council. In April he could report, 'They do not admit of Purgatory, nor of the observance of Lent and other fasts, nor of the festivals of Saints and worship of images, which is the shortest way to arrive at the plundering of the church of St. Thomas of Canterbury and other places of resort for pilgrims in this country.'[49]

There is a Lutheran flavour to the changes, but there was one particular issue which would always prevent Henry and Anne from adhering to Lutheranism proper: in Martin Luther's eyes, Henry's first marriage was valid and thus Mary's legitimacy was unquestioned.

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Chapuys' despatches finally now give us a glimpse of Jane Seymour, soon to replace Anne as Henry's wife. Henry had been paying court to her since January 1536, and perhaps even since late 1535, and by April he was obviously captivated by her. He had played a long waiting game with Anne but was not prepared to repeat it with Jane. In April he sent Jane a purse full of coins with a letter, the idea being that Jane would be paid for her 'services' should she give them.[50] Her calm and measured response took everyone by surprise.[51]

Reports Chapuys,

> Respectfully kissing the letter, she returned it to the messenger without opening it, and then falling on her knees, begged the royal messenger to entreat the King in her name to consider that she was a well-born damsel, the daughter of good and honourable parents without blame or reproach of any kind; there was no treasure in this world that she valued as much as her honour, and on no account would she lose it, even if she were to die a thousand deaths. If the King wished to make her a present of money, she requested him to reserve it for such a time as God would be pleased to send her some advantageous marriage.[52]

Jane's shrewd move says a lot not only about those coaching her, but her own quiet determination. She had clearly learnt more from Anne Boleyn than she would care to admit – the art of enticing the suitor, then drawing back, while always protesting her virtue. Henry fell for the same trick twice. Jane was neither the fiery, quick-witted Anne, nor a dim-witted doormat. She was clever enough to return the letter unopened as a tactful way of extricating herself from being propositioned.

Gertrude Courtenay, Marchioness of Exeter and old friend of Katherine of Aragon's, could report that Henry was now consumed by

his infatuation. She had played her part – the honourable maiden – to perfection, which appealed to Henry's vanity. Having tried his luck with the sultry vixen, he was ready for something different. Henry now courted Jane with the utmost respect, only spending time with her in the company of chaperones. Cromwell was eager to assist, offering his private rooms at court, which 'have access through certain galleries without being seen, of which room the young lady's elder brother and his wife have already taken possession for the express purpose of her repairing thither'.[53]

Henry was perhaps the only person who believed his seduction was an organic process; even Chapuys had heard that Nicholas Carew, a courtier who had been waiting for the opportunity to destroy Anne, had coached Jane carefully, and he took up his role with gusto.[54] Jane was encouraged to poison Henry's mind against his wife, presenting herself as an alternative.[55] Chapuys notes, 'In fact, it will not be Carew's fault if the aforesaid concubine, though a cousin of his, is not overthrown one of these days, for I hear that he is daily conspiring against her, and trying to persuade Miss Seymour and her friends to accomplish her ruin.'[56]

Jane was a rallying point and a popular one with the conservative faction. Anne had struggled to win over her court, but without Henry's favour she was at her most vulnerable. Jane took the initiative whenever she spent time with Henry, speaking honestly about Anne's unpopularity, which, at least for now, Henry allowed. Chapuys was approached by Jane's supporters to become involved in machinations against Anne, but he was non-committal, merely stating that whoever helped bring Anne down would be doing 'meritorious work'.[57] Mary was his concern and anyone who supported her found support in Chapuys.

Again the ambassador was prepared for the reality that a new marriage would most likely move Mary even further from the throne, but, in his own words, 'if we cannot gain, at least we shall lose nothing by the event'.[58] It was becoming clear that an Anglo–Imperial alliance was possible and Chapuys and Cromwell worked together to forge it.[59] Charles had given his assent for his ambassador to proceed, and had written letters to Cromwell directly. Chapuys naturally hurried to the Chancellor's house, which he took the time to describe in detail. The large property had been gifted to him by Henry and was impressively furnished with Flemish tapestries and ornate Italian furniture.[60] It had been decided that Charles would agree to mediate between Henry and Pope Paul, and in return Henry would assist in the war against the Turks and the French, and finally restore Mary to the succession. Cromwell admitted that the Pope may be a sticking point, but he was confident that the other suggestions would go down well.

Chapuys reported that Cromwell despatched a messenger to the king as he departed, informing Henry that 'I had brought him the best news in the world'.[61]

On Easter Monday, Cromwell met Henry, arriving at court before the king was even awake, to report his meeting with Chapuys and the letters from Charles. To both men's relief, Henry was receptive and pleased by Charles's words and looked forward to healing the rift between the two. A series of events in which Anne was involved now puzzled Chapuys.

> Before the King went out to mass Cromwell came to me on his part to ask if I would not go and visit and kiss the Concubine, which would be doing a pleasure to this King; nevertheless, he left it to me. I told him that for a long time my will had been slave to that of the King, and that to serve him it was enough to command me; but that I thought … such a visit would not be advisable, and I begged Cromwell to excuse it, and dissuade the said visit in order not to spoil matters.[62]

Henry's councillors, particularly Thomas and George Boleyn, greeted Chapuys warmly.[63]

George was determined to grab Chapuys' attention; perhaps the Boleyns were apprehensive that things were beginning to slip away. George drew Chapuys away from the rest of court prior to an audience with Henry; he, who seemed eager to not only strike up a conversation, but to be seen in a cordial talk with the Imperial ambassador.[64] George made quite an over-the-top show of effusively greeting the ambassador, who tried to keep the conversation light and impersonal. He was wary that George might launch yet again into an earnest conversation about religion, which he seemed to enjoy doing on numerous occasions with the ambassador.

Chapuys took a small degree of pleasure in needling George in particular about the proposed alliance with Charles: 'I said that I did not doubt that he had as great pleasure in what was taking place as any other, and that he would assist as in a matter for the benefit of the whole world, but especially of himself and his friends.'[65]

In his seven years at court, Anne and Chapuys had never met. So it was of great interest to everyone attending Mass this day how they would react when they inevitably crossed paths. Chapuys seems almost to have anticipated it as he wrote: 'I was conducted to the Chapel by lord Rochefort, the concubine's brother, and when the offering came a great many people flocked round the King, out of curiosity, and wishing no doubt to know what sort of a mien the concubine and I should put on.'[66] Anne and Henry descended from the royal chapel and made their way to the altar. They passed the ambassador, who was already bowing to the couple. Chapuys

continues: ‘I must say that she was affable enough on the occasion for on my being placed behind the door by which she entered the chapel, she turned round to return the reverence which I made her when she passed.[67]

Historians have read much into this incident; that Henry was forcing Chapuys, and thereby Charles, to acknowledge Anne, or more likely, an increasingly vulnerable Anne was genuinely seeking a rapprochement with Charles through his ambassador.

Chapuys himself, while surprised, did not dwell on the incident. It is entirely possible that Chapuys was deliberately downplaying the situation, but he knew what machinations now swirled around Anne – she was certainly more vulnerable than she might have assumed.

Chapuys then dined with George and Henry’s councillors, but was later told that Anne had asked Henry why Chapuys had not dined with them and the other ambassadors. Henry dismissed her, stating that it was ‘not without good reason’.[68] Anne then attempted to ingratiate herself with Chapuys by abusing the French ambassador, who was sure to report the incident to his absent Imperial counterpart.

Chapuys had other matters on his mind besides Anne and her new tactics. He dined with Edward Seymour, one of Jane’s elder brothers, who impressed him. Edward accompanied the ambassador in to Henry’s private chamber, to meet Cromwell and the Lord Chancellor, Thomas Audley; this was the long-awaited audience, from which they were certain of a favourable outcome.[69] However, the men failed to take into account Henry’s penchant of doing the opposite of what was expected of him. With great courtesy and ‘mildness’, Chapuys presented to Henry the four proposals that he, Cromwell and Charles had composed. Henry quietly listened to them. So far so good. The ambassador ended his speech by saying that Charles desired the peace and tranquillity of Christendom.[70]

Henry’s reaction shocked the group of men. He burst out laughing, but there was no humour in his voice.[71] A snap of his large fingers and Cromwell was drawn into a window bay, to be berated by his master while Edward Seymour awkwardly attempted to keep Chapuys occupied.

Henry and his minister exchanged heated words, resulting in Cromwell leaving the argument and sitting down to have a drink, seemingly agitated.[72] Henry followed, but his target was Chapuys. Henry’s issues with the Pope were none of Charles’s business, and Mary was his daughter, thus he could do what he pleased. As to the suggestion of war against the Turks, Henry told the ambassador that it was necessary first to re-establish old friendships before putting people to expense.[73] He also told him ‘he was no longer a child, and that they must not give him the stick, and then caress him, appealing

to him and begging him. In saying this, to show how he was experienced in business, he began playing with his fingers on his knees, and doing as if he were calling a child to pacify it'.[74]

It was a bizarre spectacle but, although he was clearly irritated, Chapuys continued patiently and calmly, attempting to diffuse the situation. It was akin to baiting a wounded animal. Henry became even more enraged, and began to verbally abuse Charles to the ambassador. History was tweaked somewhat as Henry roared that, without him, Charles would never have acquired his empire or Spain.[75] The dam broke, and a barrage of all the hurts – real and imagined – spewed forth as Henry unburdened himself. Charles's 'betrayal' of Henry after a victory at Pavia years prior was resurrected, among other instances that showed the Emperor to be a poor friend and ally. Chapuys' response was more or less 'move on'.[76] The past was the past; they were trying to look to the future. Henry turned on Cromwell and Audley, apparently looking for some sort of applause or adulation, but was met with aghast and silent faces. Grudgingly, Henry agreed to address the proposals in the morning, hopefully with a clearer head.[77]

The ambassador took his leave and hastily retreated to Cromwell's house, closely followed by Cromwell. Both men were shell-shocked; neither had anticipated such a brutal dismissal of their carefully composed treaty. 'Cromwell, who was hardly able to speak for sorrow, and had never been more mortified in his life than with the said reply.'[78]

Chapuys advised Cromwell to drop the issue, and focus on seeing what could be done to find a husband for Mary. Cromwell and Chapuys were not the only targets of Henry's wrath: an audience with the French ambassador had resulted in Henry letting loose once more. He was already writing a firm and threatening letter to Francis to cease his pursuit of a marriage for Mary. The French ambassador was left as mortified as Chapuys the day before.[79]

Chapuys immediately appraised Charles of Henry's reaction, which shocked Charles. Charles' response began with the warm and personal 'Chiez et feal!', which loosely translates as 'Dear and trusted friend':

> We believe that the mission to the King of England, our dear Uncle, we gave you following the conversation you had with Crumwel, was in every aspect honest and reasonable and would have deserved a more gracious reply from the King. We think that you talked to him courteously as he has always seemed to appreciate your negotiation there.[80]

Charles lamented Henry's coldness, and made it clear that, on the Imperial side at least, they were willing to forget and forgive: 'Not only do we want to forget all the things that happened in the past that

could have destroyed our relationship and want to make it indissoluble, but also for the good affection we always had and still have for his Kingdom.'[81] As to Henry's reaction to Chapuys' proposal for Mary, Charles was remarkably conciliatory:

> Regarding the Princess, our cousin, we believe that as he is a good father and because of his obligation of parenthood, he will make the right decisions in her interest, according to her great virtues and her good qualities. Because of the value of the Princess, we have to ask the King to be a good father. We believe that out of reason, honesty and friendship, the relatives are allowed to intercede with fathers on behalf of the well being of their children. And we do so because we have always believed that if the King had in any way rejected her, it wasn't his fault but it was due to someone else's bad influence.[82]

That 'bad influence' was about to be removed.

St George's Day, 23 April 1536, was an ominous day for Anne. A space had recently opened up in the Order of the Garter, the highest order of chivalry in Britain and certainly the most prestigious. To celebrate St George's Day, Henry invested his chosen courtier and inducted him into the order. Unfortunately it wasn't the candidate Anne had put forward: her brother George. Instead the honour was bestowed upon Nicholas Carew, Jane Seymour's mentor.[83] It was a direct snub of the Boleyns and a message to Anne – she was now powerless.

The move sent a clear message to the Boleyn faction and the Seymours. Emboldened by the promotion, Chapuys reported that Carew stepped up his tutoring of Jane and sent messages to Mary, assuring her that Anne would soon be overthrown.[84] Mary was particularly calm about the whole matter and was no longer concerned with her place in the succession, 'nor did she wish for the King's divorce out of revenge for the many injuries inflicted on her mother, the late Queen, and on herself. Those she had willingly forgiven and forgotten for the honour of God, and she now bore no ill-will to any one whomsoever.'[85]

The next day saw the issue of the 'Oyer and Terminer', a judicial commission which was set up to hear a list of offences including treason. It was an interesting time to open such a commission. Within several days, Parliament replaced the legislation which had legitimised Anne's marriage and imposed harsh penalties of treason for refusing to acknowledge it.[86] Henry was removing all the foundations that he had worked so hard to install in the first place, but no one was entirely sure where it was all heading.

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Countless scholars have covered the minutiae of Anne's downfall

and execution, but here we will view the drama mostly through Chapuys' eyes.

It began with Mark Smeaton, the Flemish musician in Anne's chambers, who affected a rather extravagant display of despondency in Anne's rooms. Noticing the behaviour, Anne apparently asked him what the matter was, to which he replied that it was no matter, before sighing again.[87] In his recount of the incident, Chapuys noted that Anne had no patience for such games, and slapped him down for his impertinence, reminding him that he should not expect her to speak to him as an equal. Cheekily Mark had replied that a look sufficed, and he left her chambers.[88] It was a silly display, but someone had taken notice. Two days later on 30 April, Smeaton was brought to Cromwell's house in Stepney where, under questioning, he admitted to carnal relations with Anne.[89] From there it snowballed. On 30 April, Anne managed to have an altercation with Henry Norris, Henry's Chief Gentleman of the Privy Chamber and a member of her inner circle. Norris frequently visited Anne's rooms, ostensibly to court Madge Shelton, a cousin of Anne's, but he was taking his time proposing to her.[90] Again, Anne lost patience, asking him why he had not yet proposed to Madge, to which he replied that he wished to tarry a time. Anne's reaction was considerably disproportionate: she accused Norris of looking for dead men's shoes – if the king were to die, Norris wanted her for himself.[91] Appalled, Norris rejected the claim, declaring that if he entertained such a thought 'he would his head were off'.[92] Anne's retort suggested that she was only too happy to oblige, effectively forming a very public rift between the two, but also sealing their fates.

Mayday, 1 May, was a pagan celebration of love and renewal. Henry and Anne presided over the jousts, and Anne bestowed her favour on Henry's groom, Henry Norris. At some point in the afternoon, Henry received word from Cromwell: he had the confession from Smeaton that they needed. Henry abruptly left the joust with a small group of men, including Norris, without so much as a farewell to his queen; he would never see her again. Norris was now interrogated and was accused of having an affair with Anne, a charge which he indignantly denied.[93] It made no difference, and he was delivered at dawn the next morning to the Tower. Chapuys was not present for the joust, and his initial report was somewhat confused: it said Anne was accused of having an affair with Mark Smeaton, and Henry Norris was imprisoned for having had knowledge of it.

Anne was then arrested at Greenwich while presiding over a tennis match and taken to the Tower. Chapuys reports the other surprising arrests for alleged adultery with Anne, and thus for treason, included George Boleyn (alleged to have committed incest with Anne), Francis

Weston, William Brereton, William Page and the poet Thomas Wyatt.[94] All except Smeaton denied the charges.

Anne herself was partly to blame for her rapid demise. There is no firm evidence that she was guilty of adultery – this was of course a political coup with Henry's full approval – but Anne helped make it possible. She pushed the conventions of courtly love to a dangerous point just beyond that of a chivalric game. Anne had always used her sex appeal; now it was being used against her. Her hysterical ramblings in the Tower were overheard. One of them was an unguarded statement of an incident with Francis Weston that sentenced him to his death.[95]

Chapuys' letters are one of our few accounts of Anne's and the condemned men's last days. Between 2 and 15 May, while the case was being prepared against Anne (whom Chapuys rather imaginatively called Messalina). Chapuys met with Cromwell and Jane's supporters. The ambassador mentions a lady, probably a lady-in-waiting to Anne, who had been told by Anne that she blamed Chapuys personally for having lost the love of the king.[96] Chapuys wrote with amusement that he was flattered by the compliment, and considered himself lucky that he had escaped her vengeance.[97] He then continued, facetiously, 'kind-hearted and merciful as she is, she would without remorse have cast me to the dogs'.[98]

Considering the circumstances, Chapuys half expected Henry to be mourning his position, at least publicly, but Henry could not even be bothered with pretence.[99] Chapuys had been told that prior to Anne's arrest, Henry had promised Jane marriage, but he also heard that the soon-to-be married couple had already had their first spat. Would Jane, unlike her predecessor, learn from her mistakes? Jane had boldly proposed that Mary be restored to the succession, to which Henry had aggressively responded by asking if she were out of her senses to propose such a thing.[100]

> She ought to study the welfare and exaltation of her own children, if she had any by him, instead of looking out for the good of others. The said Jane Seymour replied that in soliciting the Princess' reinstatement she thought she was asking for the good, the repose, and tranquillity of himself, of the children they themselves might have, and of the kingdom in general.[101]

At least Jane knew how to flatter.

Henry was well into his courtship of Jane, and the romantic nocturnal escapades of the king and his new love were scandalous considering the circumstances. Chapuys had reported that 'so that to all appearances there cannot be the least doubt that the King will soon take the said Seymour to wife, some people believing, and even asserting, that the marriage settlements have already been drawn

up'.[102]

Chapuys also wrote at length about the general mood of the populace as Henry's true passions became embarrassingly clear.

> Already it sounds badly in the ears of the public that the King, after such ignominy and discredit as the concubine has brought on his head, should manifest more joy and pleasure now, since her arrest and trial, than he has ever done on other occasions, for he has daily gone out to dine here and there with ladies, and sometimes has remained with them till after midnight.[103]

Chapuys was amazed by Henry and was further taken aback by a report that he had filled the royal barge with minstrels and musicians, and enjoyed evenings of frenzied merrymaking up and down the Thames.[104] His attitude was compared by some to 'the joy and pleasure a man feels in getting rid of a thin, old, and vicious hack in the hope of getting soon a fine horse to ride – a very peculiarly agreeable task for this king'.[105]

Chapuys might have been uneasy, but Antoine Perrenot, son of Chapuys' friend, and his colleague de Granvelle, were overjoyed:

> Monsieur ambassador, my good colleague and friend, I have through George, your man and present messenger, received your letters and heard his charge, and you have done well to warn of what has followed beyond touching on the concubine, which in truth is music of a high range and worthy of laughing, for through this, God gives manifestly to know the iniquity of those from whom so many wrongs have come.[106]

Perhaps the last time Henry spoke of Anne was the night before the execution of the men. Henry had mentioned to one of his bishops, while cruising on the Thames, that he had predicted long ago how his marriage to Anne would end, and then proceeded to pull out a small book from his pocket, which contained a tragedy written by the king. He handed it to the man, who chose not to read it. Chapuys, with no small amount of derision, speculated that the tragedy was in reality the group of ballads Henry had written himself, 'which the mistress and her brother had made fun, as of productions entirely worthless, which circumstance was one of the principal charges brought against them at the trial'.[107]

Chapuys was openly cynical about all the charges against Anne, and he made this clear to both Charles and de Granvelle:

> Two other English gentlemen have been imprisoned along with her, and it is suspected that a good many more will share the same fate; for the King has been heard to say that he believes that upwards of 100 gentlemen have had criminal connexion with her. You never saw a prince or husband show or wear his horns more

patiently and lightly than this one does. I leave you to guess the cause of it.[108]

Rumours swirled around the court and Chapuys felt bound to report them. He was careful to qualify these particular rumours as lacking sufficient foundation. One of the prevailing myths surrounding Anne is that she committed incest with her brother George, and adultery with others, out of her desperation to conceive a son.[109] The myth stems in part from one of Chapuys' reports. However, he himself dismissed the claim, but thought it so fantastical that it was worth relaying.[110] The rumour was obviously placed to do damage to the evangelicals installed by Henry, and no doubt came from a conservative faction.

Anne and George were to be tried separately from the other accused. Chapuys had no illusions about the trumped-up charges levelled at Anne. Mark Smeaton admitted to having had liaisons with the queen on three different occasions, but Chapuys made it clear that all the others were sentenced on mere presumption or on very slight grounds, without legal proof or valid confession.[111]

Anne and her brother George were tried separately on 15 May 1536, in the king's hall in the Tower. Chapuys reported that their father, Thomas, who had been at the trial of the other condemned men, had also wished to be present for that his two children, although he is not listed as having presided. However, their uncle Norfolk, as a peer of the realm, was at the head of the jury. To each accusation of an affair with the accused men, Chapuys reported that Anne gave a plausible denial.[112] Not that it made any difference, as the outcome of the 'trial' had been decided in advance. Anne was found guilty of treason, and sentenced to be beheaded, or burned, as the king pleased. When the sentence was read to her, she received it quite calmly, and said that she was prepared to die, but was extremely sorry to hear that others, who were innocent and the king's loyal subjects, should share her fate and die through her. She ended by begging that some time should be allowed for her to prepare her soul for death.[113]

That strange prophesy Anne was fond of reciting makes its way back in the ambassador's report. Anne had often told Henry that, despite the prophecy that a queen of England was to be burnt alive, she would gladly sacrifice herself if it meant she were queen. Chapuys could only echo an ancient warning once given to Julius Caesar: *Venere idus*, *sed nondum prœterire* – the days have commenced, but have not yet ended.[114]

Thankfully her sentence was commuted to beheading by the sword.

Chapuys refused to believe a word of the charges against Anne or George, despite the fact that he had no great love for either. Of

George, Chapuys reported 'no proof of his guilt was produced except that of his having once passed many hours in her company, and other little follies'.[115]

Chapuys was impressed by George's honest and persuasive arguments, and was sure he would be acquitted of so fanciful a charge.

> He answered so well that many who were present at the trial, and heard what he said, had no difficulty in waging two to one that he would be acquitted, the more so that no witnesses were called to give evidence against him or against her, as is customary in such cases, when the accused denies the charge brought against him.[116]

Chapuys could not resist adding that Anne had been accused of confiding in her brother that Henry was impotent. This accusation was put to George in writing, but he was forbidden to read it out, and was told instead to quietly read it and plead accordingly. The court should have known better, for George read it aloud and responded, much to the consternation of the jury, that he couldn't possibly speculate, for fear of prejudicing Henry's future marriages.[117] This caused a bawdy reaction from the witnesses at the trial but, when asked if he had ever expressed a doubt as to Anne's daughter being Henry's, he stayed unusually silent. Despite his eloquent defence, it came as a surprise to all who filled the courtroom, possibly including Chapuys, that he too was found guilty.[118]

George remained stoic throughout his sentence, stating that he deserved death, apologised to those to whom he owed debts, and pleaded that they be paid by his estates after his death.[119]

George Boleyn, Norris, Weston, Brereton and Smeaton (Wyatt was spared) were set to be executed on 17 May, and Anne the next day. Chapuys was not present for either executions, but he was well informed. He wrote with distaste and something akin to sympathy that George and the others were executed on Tower Hill, where Anne could witness it from her window. He suspected it was a last cruel gift from her husband.[120]

> Rochefort [George] before dying declared himself to be innocent of all the charges brought against him, though he owned that he deserved death for having been contaminated with the new heresies, and having caused many others to be infected with them. He had no doubt, said he on the scaffold, that God had punished him for that, and, therefore, he recommended all to forsake heretical doctrines and practices, and return to true faith and religion. Which words on the mouth of such a man as lord Rochefort will be the cause of innumerable people here making amends for their sins, and being converted.[121]

Chapuys wrote that

> the concubine herself is to be beheaded without fail tomorrow, or on Friday, at the latest, and I have my reasons for saying that the King is very impatient, and would have liked the execution to have already taken place; for the day before Anne's condemnation he sent the Grand Squire and many others in quest of Mistress Seymour, and made her come to within one mile of his own residence, where she is being splendidly entertained and served by cooks and officers of the royal household.[122]

The Emperor, more removed from the situation, shared none of Chapuys' incredulity and disdain. Charles also clearly gave no weight to the news that Henry would marry yet another commoner, and was already looking for suitable brides for the king: Charles's niece, the Infanta of Portugal and daughter of the Queen of France, would be ideal, and he instructed Chapuys to suggest the marriage to Henry.

> Chiez et feal! Thanks to your man who brought this, we have received your two letters and heard about what is going on in the county where you are, and you were right to send him to tell us what happened to the Courtesan of the King of England, and as it is the case, as we agree to the divine wish, and that the King takes it to heart as he should, we keep saying what we told you in our last letters whose copies are joined to this letter, which is that the King wants to get remarried, and as we have thought about the options of marriage since our last letters.[123]
>
> We put you in charge of showing him the options of marriage, in order to let him know the good and cordial affection that has been in the past towards him and for the tranquillity and rest of his kingdom, and that if he wishes to hear it, we hope, as there is a perfect friendship between us and the King of Portugal, to make the deal, and you will do your best to, with the possible dexterity bring the previously mentioned options.[124]

The day after Jane and Henry were betrothed, Charles was still playing matchmaker; this time the Duchess of Milan was a viable option. It put Chapuys, who knew very well that Henry had his heart set on Jane, in an awkward position.

On the same day, the 18th, Cranmer undid all his hard work to secure Elizabeth's succession and pronounced sentence that she was a bastard. Chapuys initially reported incorrectly that Norris had been declared her father. Anne's marriage was then declared unlawful and invalid – after three years of Henry's supporters arguing the opposite – due to his affinity with Anne's sister. The ploy Henry had used to annul his marriage with Katherine was at once resurrected to ensure that Anne did not die a queen.[125]

Chapuys was informed that Anne received the Holy Sacrament,

and swore on the peril of her soul's damnation that she had not betrayed Henry. Chapuys believed her.[126]

Anne's execution was delayed until the next day. On the 19th, William Kingston conducted Anne to the scaffold, where she gave a simple speech to the crowds that had come to watch her last moments. Blindfolded, she knelt, and the executioner, brought from Calais especially, brought the sword around. So it was over. Seven years of animosity, enmity and distrust came to an end in the quick, violent swing of a French sword against a long neck.

Chapuys' account of Anne's death suggests he admired her at the end and certainly felt disgust at the way she had been deposed. She had been a large part of his life, a constant presence, and now it was as if she had never been. Chapuys was not on Tower Green to witness the event; he reported that no foreigners were allowed to witness the execution. Cromwell, and other members of the King's Privy Council, as well as hundreds of the public, came to witness Anne's final moments. Chapuys had heard a rumour, which thankfully did not come to pass, that Anne's head would be exposed on London Bridge, at least for some time.[127]

His last description of her testifies to the sort of woman Anne was. Beyond the divorce drama, the jealous squabbles and the treatment of Mary, Anne was in Chapuys' eyes an innocent woman. His words are heartfelt in their admiration:

> No one ever shewed more courage or greater readiness to meet death than she did, having, as the report goes, begged and solicited those under whose keeping she was to hasten the execution. When orders came from the King to have it delayed until to-day, she seemed sorry, and begged and entreated the governor of the Tower for God's sake, to go to the King, and beg of him that, since she was well disposed and prepared for death, she should be despatched immediately.[128]

A multitude of issues led to Anne's removal. Her recent miscarriage and Henry's wandering eye did not help, but there is also the fact that the marriage had become politically useless, even detrimental, to Henry. Katherine had at least brought with her the power and prestige of the Holy Roman Empire, and her role as queen had been utterly unchallenged for over two decades. Anne on the other hand had failed to provide a son, and the marriage was not recognised by the Holy Roman Empire or the papacy; even the French had reservations. Henry had fought an uphill battle to force Anne's queenship to be recognised throughout Europe, to no avail. She was a costly investment who had yielded little return.

What can we extrapolate from Chapuys' letters regarding his involvement in Anne's demise? He left us with a few veiled references,

but they do not amount to a charge that he engineered her downfall. On 2 May 1536, he wrote that Mary had encouraged him to get rid of Anne and, on her advice, he employed various means to do so.

> I accordingly used several means to promote the matter, both with Cromwell and with others, of which I have not hitherto written, awaiting some certain issue of the affair, which, in my opinion, has come to pass much better than anybody could have believed, to the great disgrace [of the Concubine].[129]

The ambassador does not tell us what these 'several means' were. However, as we have seen, Chapuys did encourage the nobility, as well as Cromwell and other anti-Boleyn factions to oppose Anne. He may have contributed to the fire, but he did not strike the match. Chapuys would for some time ponder on those violent weeks of May 1536.[130] As he wrote to Charles, 'The executioner's sword and her own death were virtually to separate and divorce man and wife. However, if such was their intention it strikes me that it would have been a far more decent and honest excuse to allege that she had been married to another man still alive.'[131] A pre-contract to Henry Percy, Anne's previous flame, would have certainly tied things up neatly. Anne's death was, to the ambassador, utterly unnecessary, and he could only write, 'May God permit that this may be his last folly.'[132]

It wouldn't be.

Sacrifice

> *It was necessary that she should make all manner of sacrifices, and dissemble for some time to come … God looked more into the intentions than into the deeds of men, and now she had a better opportunity than when the King's mistress was alive.*
>
> Chapuys, 1536

In his biography of Henry's six wives, historian David Starkey bluntly states, 'How a woman like Jane Seymour became Queen of England is a mystery.'[1] This echoes the thoughts of many at court, and has baffled historians for centuries. Certainly Chapuys searched in vain for an answer. However, is it really such a mystery? Considering the number of unexpected and inexplicable decisions Henry had made up to this point, marrying a woman who was nothing like his other wives was par for the course.

Anne had been a tempest of life: vivacious, sultry, passionate, and somewhat highly strung. As a mistress, Anne had been exciting but high-maintenance and unable to make the transition to a dutiful wife; Jane was low-maintenance and dutiful.

Jane was Henry's first serious infatuation since marrying Anne. She has been described as the sixteenth-century man's (and especially Henry's) ideal 'little woman'.[2] The popular myth was that she was soft-spoken, docile and subservient.[3] Perhaps any woman who refrained from publicly berating and chiding Henry would be considered docile after Anne. Jane read Henry's mood and acted accordingly, something Anne had often failed to do.

However, Tudor historiography argues that Jane could not possibly have been as meek and innocent as she appeared; that her quiet and deferential demeanour hid a shrewd and calculating young woman who seized the chance to snare a monarch.

Both Anne and Jane were ladies-in-waiting who seduced the king away from their mistresses; Anne from Katherine and Jane from Anne. The similarity is intriguing; so too is the disconnect, in that history has judged both women so differently. Anne's harsh treatment of Katherine is often eclipsed by her passionate love affair with Henry and her tragic end. Yet Jane's usurpation of Anne has tarnished her image. Anne is seen as victim, but Jane as 'accessory-after-the-fact to the judicial murder of Anne'.[4]

As Chapuys reported, Henry was sailing up the Thames to his betrothed within minutes of the execution of his previous wife. Therefore, the view has arisen that Jane was complicit in her death. Yet there is no evidence that she was an accessory, that law pertains to an individual who receives or assists another person, who is, to his or her knowledge, guilty of any offence against the law. Yet Henry *was*

the law. No one at court truly emerged from Anne's execution and that of the condemned men without some blood on their hands.

We cannot possibly know what Jane may or may not have felt about Anne's death – there are no accounts of their personal feelings – just as we do not truly know if Anne felt any sympathy for Katherine when she usurped her. Both women had ambitions and played their own personal games of seduction. As with Eustace, we must accept that there are nuanced shades of grey in between the black-and-white depictions of these two figures.

In his first report to de Granvelle, Chapuys describes Jane thus: 'Of middle stature and no great beauty, so fair that one would call her rather pale than otherwise. She is over 25 years old ... not a woman of great wit, but she may have good understanding (*un bel enigm* qu. *engin*?)[5]

Chapuys' observation suggests that while Jane may not have been of great intellect, she may have been more astute than she let on. Chapuys also reported that she was obedient, and reported a third party's observation that 'she is said to be rather proud and haughty'.[6] Of more importance to Chapuys than her looks or personality was what she could bring to the Imperial table.

The blandness of Jane's face in her portrait, housed in the Kunsthistoriches Museum in Vienna, has allowed historians to treat Jane as a blank canvas, projecting their own personal views of her, and dismissing thoughts of vitality, personal hopes and ambition, and, above all, a personality.

Henry had steadily become infatuated with Jane despite modern perceptions of her 'blandness'. Their courtship lasted at least four and a half months, which is hardly a whirlwind romance. Henry consciously chose Jane over Anne. He fell out of love with Anne in the process.

Jane proved that she could excel at queenship and as Henry's wife. There is clear evidence that Jane was ambitious, certainly as determined as Anne, but her ambition was more subtle, and carefully nurtured by her crack team of supporters.[7] These included her family and Nicholas Carew, Exeter, Lord Montague; his brother Geoffrey; Sir Thomas Elyot; and the king's cousin, the Dowager Countess of Kildare. They formed the Seymour faction.[8]

The Seymours and Chapuys knew that now Henry had made his second mistress his wife, the position of mistress was again vacant. Throughout Henry's reign women had attempted to fill the gap, but few posed any serious threats, and they were discarded as cheerfully as they had been picked up.[9] Jane, Chapuys was hopeful, would remain.

Jane is not a constant feature of the ambassador's despatches

during her reign, which perhaps contributes to the prevailing myth that she was inconsequential, but there is a plausible explanation. From December 1536 through to November 1537 we have a lengthy gap in Chapuys' letters. Letters to Charles, de Granvelle or Mary of Hungary cannot be found either in Vienna or Brussels. We know he was still writing prolifically, as Charles's responses are frequent and directly address Chapuys' letters. Without his correspondence, we lose his vital perspective of this period, and that includes Jane herself. It was previously believed that Chapuys had left England for several months in 1537, but his letters from London to his mother, and Charles's responses to him, show that he remained there. However, the little he did write about Jane suggests that Chapuys came to see her as an intelligent woman, whose marriage to Henry would have undoubtedly been successful had she survived. Yet, at first, Chapuys seemed dubious of Jane's morals. The ambassador thought that the court under Henry and Anne's rule could be licentious at times and thus he doubted that a young single woman with no suitors on the horizon could retain her dignity and honour. Chapuys wrote to de Granvelle's son, Antoine Perrenot, who had been appointed as the Emperor's minister, that the new queen was the 'sister of a certain Edward Seymour who has been in the service of his majesty while she herself was formally in the household of the good queen Katherine'.[10]

'I leave you to judge whether, being English and having long frequented the court, *si elle ne tiendroit pas a conscience de navoirpourveu et prevenu de savoir que cest de faire nopces*.' In short, whether she was aware of matters pertaining to marriage.[11]

Chapuys also took a swipe at Henry. 'According to the account given of him [Henry] by the Concubine [Anne] he has neither vigour nor virtue; and besides he may make a condition in the marriage that she may be a virgin, and when he has a mind to divorce her he will find enough of witnesses.[12]

Within two weeks of Anne's execution they were married in the queen's closet at Whitehall.[13] All seemed well, but a particular remark of Henry's has been used to question his motives for marrying Jane, although Chapuys does not read too much into what is probably a throwaway line. A mere week after Anne's execution and Henry's marriage, he encountered several young, beautiful women at court. Chapuys recounted that Henry had sighed and declared that he was sorry he had not seen them before he was married.[14] Although the ambassador knew that Henry could be downright mercenary when it came to romance, he gave no indication that Henry was unhappy with Jane.

*

In an extraordinary conversation with Chapuys regarding Anne's

downfall, Cromwell was eager to reveal who had been behind it. 'Cromwell observed, since the execution of the Royal mistress, things will go on better than before, as you may well consider.'

Cromwell confided that Henry had first authorised and commissioned him to prosecute Anne and quickly have her taken care of, which he added he had taken considerable trouble to do. Yet Cromwell also admitted that he had his own motivation. 'It was he [Cromwell] who, in consequence of the disappointment and anger he had felt on hearing the King's answer to me [Chapuys] on the third day of Easter [at the disastrous meeting regarding Charles's proposed peace treaty], had planned and brought about the whole affair.'[15]

None of Anne's supposed affairs are mentioned; in fact, no mention is made at all of the licentiousness for which she was accused. Cromwell whitewashed it, declaring that what had truly raised his suspicions, and caused him to begin investigating Anne, was the rumour from Flanders of a conspiracy against the king's life by people close to him.[16]

This was a complete fabrication, made even more peculiar by Cromwell's lavish praise: 'Cromwell went on to extol beyond measure the sense, the wit, and the courage of the deceased Royal mistress, as well as of her brother.'[17]

What game was Cromwell playing we may well ask? Chapuys found it odd, but it also throws doubt on Cromwell's assertions that Henry had instructed him to investigate Anne and he was only doing as he was bid. The praise of Anne and George certainly shows Cromwell's desire to absolve himself in the ambassador's eyes, of any guilt for their execution.

Chapuys suffered terribly from gout throughout 1536, but he also developed a severe fever, which prevented him from going to court. Usually able to write despite his ailments, his brief silence suggests it was serious indeed. Within a couple of weeks he was on the mend and, although too unwell to go to court, corresponded with Cromwell from his bed.

Chapuys was cautiously optimistic that, with Jane's influence, Mary would be restored to the succession, which she might do, but he had stipulations. In a meeting with Cromwell, Henry gave him an outline of what Mary was to agree: he was to persuade Mary to write to her father and capitulate to his demands, namely that her parents' marriage had been void. Henry chose Chapuys to be the velvet glove on his iron fist; the ambassador was more concilliatory now that he had been in the past, and told Charles that he felt the suggestions were honest and reasonable.

Chapuys' only concern was that none of the clauses in the document

> directly or indirectly touch on the Princess' honour and rights, or on those of her mother, the late Queen, or on the conscience of either; for otherwise (said I) not all the gold in the world would make her consent to sign it, and in my opinion her refusal would only increase her father's indignation.[18]

The official document, however, was very different from what Cromwell had previously outlined, and Chapuys suspected Mary was being led into a trap. At the suggestion, Cromwell smoothly told the ambassador that he was welcome to revise the letter and then send it to Mary, effectively widening the trap, if indeed there was one, for Chapuys and, through him, Charles.[19]

Chapuys attempted to delay the proceedings while he waited for Charles's opinion, and advised Mary not to sign anything. His hopes were still on Jane's influence. In the first week of June, Chapuys came face to face with the new queen. Jane and Henry received the ambassador warmly, and Chapuys told them of Charles's reaction to Anne's execution,

> And that upon my remarking that she richly deserved her fate, inasmuch as it was rumoured that her crime was a conspiracy against the King's life, Your Majesty, on hearing this, seemed to be troubled, astonished, and much grieved at it, asking those who were with you at the time, whether it was possible for such wickedness, malice and perversity to be in the world, as to attempt the life of so humane and virtuous a prince.[20]

Chapuys was either sticking with the new version of history, or he was making a subtle jab at Henry.

For a brief moment, Chapuys appears left, right, and centre at court. The French had been in vogue throughout Anne's reign, but now it was Chapuys' time to shine. In lieu of a coronation, pageants and masques were held, and a river procession was held from Greenwich to Whitehall. Court chronicler Thomas Wriothesley describes the procession, in which Chapuys stood in the large Imperial tent set up on the south bank of the Thames:

> The Emperoures Embassidour stoode in a tente with a banner of the Emperoures armes seett in the topp of his tente and divers banners about the same, he himself being in a rych gowne of purple satten, with divers gentlemen standinge about him with gownes and cottes of velvett; and when the Beach Kinges barge came by him, he sent tow bottes of his servantes to rowe aboute the Kinges barge, one of them were his trumpetters, and another with shalmes and sage-bottes, and so made a great reverence to the Kinge and Queene as they came by him, and then he lett shott a fortie great gonns, and as the Kinge came against the Tower of London their was shott above fower hundred peeces of ordinance,

> and all the Tower walls towardes the water side were sett with great streamers and banners; and so the Kinge passed throwe London Bridge, with his trumpetts blowinge before him, and shalmes, sagbuttes, and dromeslawes playing also in barges going before him, which was a goodlie sight to beholde.[21]

Days later, the eager ambassador was escorted to the queen's rooms, where he reverently kissed Jane's hand, congratulating her on her marriage. Henry was present but left the pair and began to converse with other ladies in the room. Chapuys took his chance.

> I told her besides that although the device of the lady who had preceded her on the throne was 'The happiest of women', I had no doubt she herself would fully realise that motto. I was sure that Your Majesty would be equally rejoiced, as the King himself had been, at meeting with such a virtuous and amiable queen, the more so that her brother had once been in Your Majesty's service.

Within minutes he had brought up the subject of Mary, suggesting that the princess would appreciate any small favour Jane wished to bestow upon her. Henry did not attempt to muzzle Jane; she showed every sign of confidence as she promised the ambassador she would do all in her power to see to Mary's affairs. Jane displayed an urbane manner; she had a gentle touch and seemed to charm those around her. She had proved that she didn't require a sexy sensuality, merely an easy grace, to interact with her husband and her subjects. Whatever his first impressions, Chapuys had found a queen he could admire and revere in the same vein as Katherine.

> It was almost impossible to believe the joy and pleasure which Englishmen of all ranks had felt at the marriage, owing especially to the rumour that had circulated abroad that she was continually trying to persuade the King to restore the Princess to his favour, as she formerly was. I ended by begging her to take care of the Princess' affairs; which she kindly promised to do, saying that she would work in earnest to deserve the honourable name which I had given her of pacificator, that is, 'preserver and guardian of peace'.[22]

Jane had held her own remarkably well so far. It was Henry who seemed unnerved by the conversation and quickly rejoined the two, putting an end to the discussion. He immediately made excuses for Jane, telling the ambassador that she was overwhelmed and not used to such a reception or meeting with ambassadors.[23] It would seem that Henry was rescuing Jane, but Chapuys' letters suggest, in fact, that she was doing too well, had become too confident in her conversation with the ambassador and, most importantly, was promising too much. Henry would settle for nothing less than Mary's absolute submission;

he sent his councillors, headed by the Duke of Norfolk, to Hunsdon in Hertfordshire, where Mary was lodged. The ambassador's informant in Mary's household reported that she was threatened and cajoled to officially swear that her mother's marriage was void, and to acknowledge her father as Supreme Head of the Church.

Chapuys was incensed by Norfolk's response to her refusal: 'Were she his or any other man's daughter, he would beat her to death, or strike her head against the wall until he made it as soft as a boiled apple; in short that she was a traiteress [*sic*], and would be punished as such.'[24] The men left her to ponder her fate.

The ambassador's advice changed; the time for battle had passed, and now Mary needed to capitulate to whatever demands her father made of her, and hope that in the future she might be restored. 'It was necessary that she should make all manner of sacrifices, and dissemble for some time to come … God looked more into the intentions than into the deeds of men, and now she had a better opportunity than when the King's mistress was alive.'[25]

Cromwell added his voice, writing a letter of chastisement to Mary, which had little effect; only Chapuys could convince her to submit. In a sense Mary was in more danger now, even with Jane as queen, than she had been with Anne at her most vindictive; neither wife could truly influence Henry when it came to his daughter.

In private conversations, Cromwell had, on some occasions after Anne's death, referred to Mary as princess, which Chapuys never failed to do. The ambassador noted that not only had Cromwell stopped using the title, but he had even begged Chapuys to do the same. Henry now considered his eldest daughter to be a traitor, and embarked on interrogations of her known supporters, who he believed were encouraging her. Chapuys was not included in the line-up, known as he was for urging Mary to make a sacrifice.

Mary was given one final chance, and thankfully took her ambassador's advice.

> After Mary had signed the paper which the King sent her, the deputation was ordered to go back, accompanied by other fresh commissioners, among whom was Master Cromwell himself, who had particular charge of presenting her a most gracious letter of the King's, and besides that, as is the custom of this country, a countersign with the paternal blessing.[26]

The change in her treatment was immediate. Cromwell and Henry's councillors now kneeled as they addressed Mary, even begging her to forgive their rude conduct. She was safe once again, restored to favour and her father's heart, but in her heart she felt she had betrayed her mother.

The ambassador fretted for her welfare, noting that she had grown

despondent, and suggested that Charles add his voice to Chapuys' assurances that she had done what she had to. Was Mary also perhaps deflated that Jane had not tried to prevent her ordeal? Jane and her supporters had promised a turnaround, but nothing had eventuated; instead she had had to concede more than she anticipated. In this matter, Chapuys had been her sole supporter.

Within three weeks, Mary made the journey to Hackney for her first meeting with her father in five years. Whatever Mary felt, every phrase of the ambassador's despatch shows his real joy and relief that Henry was affectionate and loving towards his daughter. Jane was no doubt thrilled that at last some progress had been made, and gave her new daughter-in-law a diamond ring. From her father, Mary received 1,000 crowns. No request for an allowance would go ignored, her every whim would be catered for. Chapuys has no record of the details of the meeting – of what was said and how affectionate the royal trio were with each other – but his satisfaction with Jane and Mary's relationship is evident. Perhaps Jane had used a different approach with Mary. Anne had invited her to call her 'mother'; Jane had taken it as a given that Katherine would always be irreplaceable in her daughter's eyes.

Despite the successful meeting, Chapuys was again planning ahead. He expected that Mary would be restored to the succession following Anne's death, but the reality was that Henry had either no intention of doing so or had changed his mind. It hardly mattered; what did matter was Henry's recent statute, which stated that, if he had no legitimate male children, he could choose an heir. Mary's stock was at a high and, most importantly, Henry's illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy, was reportedly dying from tuberculosis.[27]

Another less direct contender for the throne was Margaret Douglas, Henry's niece, who was currently residing at court. However, Chapuys reported later in July that the young Margaret had displeased her uncle by embarking on an affair with the younger half-brother of the Duke of Norfolk, also called Thomas. Romance was all very well, but Henry responded by putting Thomas in the Tower and Margaret under house arrest. The entire debacle caught Chapuys' imagination; perhaps he even projected his own frustrations about Mary's situation. Even if the relationship had been consummated, which he reported it wasn't, in his eyes Margaret Douglas still deserved forgiveness. Firstly, Henry was hardly a good role model for sensible affairs himself, but it was the ambassador's argument that she should have been married at least eight years prior; she was being deprived of happiness.[28] One could argue Mary was in exactly the same boat. During 1536–7, both Charles and Francis put forward their candidates for marriage to Mary. The Imperial candidate was Dom Luiz, brother of the King of

Portugal, which would have been an advantageous match. Chapuys loyally pressed Charles's cause, though he was privately convinced that Henry would not allow Mary to marry outside the kingdom, or at all.

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It is only from 1536/7 that we first have extant personal correspondence between Eustace and his family in Annecy and Geneva. These letters are a respite from the daily political reports for these months and are filled with Chapuys' domestic matters. They reveal a man at the head of his family, perhaps the most successful member, and one of the few to leave Annecy. His mother Guigone depended on him, and it is indeed a loss that we have so few of their letters. Eustace did everything he could, not only for his mother, but for his nieces, nephews and cousins.

We are fortunate to have a few letters from Eustace to his mother from June of 1537, in which he ignores her assurances that she is doing well financially and insists on sending her money, arguing that she must be getting nothing from his revenues and benefices in Annecy and Geneva.

Eustace's nephew Phillipe, son of his elder brother Louis, has followed in his uncle's footsteps, completing his law degree in Turin and would join Eustace's household in London in 1537. Philippe Chapuys was very much like his uncle: he was a good canonist, and a Greek and Latin scholar. In his uncle's household he blossomed, and Eustace did all he could to assist him, including securing a benefice with the help of de Granvelle. Months later, Philippe would prove essential to his uncle. Eustace has a good relationship with his nephew, but he had difficulties with his niece Alexandrine, daughter of his younger brother François.

Alexandrine had made a rather disappointing love match, which infuriated her uncle. He wrote to his mother that he would have paid 1,000 crowns for her dowry had she been more sensible in her choice. In another letter from 1538 he advises his mother Guigone that the family had enough money to buy a modest investment property. Despite his distance, Eustace was very involved in the family's affairs.

King Francis declared war on Charles in June of 1536, and Chapuys was instructed to secure Henry's support or, at best, a promise that he would not interfere.[29] Both the Imperial and the French ambassador, Antoine de Castelnau, were invited to dine with Henry's councillors, after which Henry played them off against each other. Henry had an audience with both ambassadors, and each man was invited to put forward his case. Chapuys was affronted by the allegations that Charles had broken treaties and instigated hostilities with Francis, arguing that Charles did not intend war; France had

made the declaration first, and the accusation that he intended to break into war was ridiculous, 'for whatever has begun cannot begin again'.[30]

To the French ambassador's accusation that Charles III, Duke of Savoy, had allied with the Emperor, Chapuys' tart reply was a reference to one of Aesop's fables (he had an undivided audience after all): it was a case of the wolf accusing sheep of having troubled his water. Chapuys then went on the offensive, utilising his legal training against de Castelnau; in short, he got technical, causing the French ambassador to become flustered and declare that he refused to debate with Chapuys unprepared.

Chapuys ridiculed the French ambassador for the councillors' benefit – they all appreciated Chapuys' humorous retorts at de Castelnau's expense. Norfolk concluded that both ambassadors should put their arguments before the king in writing, to which the French ambassador, in a state of agitation, hotly refused. Chapuys smugly reported to Charles that it suited him not to have to waste his time refuting de Castelnau's arguments a second time.[31] Chapuys came out on top, but he failed to procure from Henry any promise to remain neutral.

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By October of 1536, the English public mood had turned violent over the suppression of the monasteries and the destruction of religious houses. As Chapuys had predicted years prior, riots began to erupt in Lincolnshire and spread further north. The rebellion, which would be known as the Pilgrimage of Grace, forced Henry further towards an Anglo–Imperial alliance. We have evidence that, prior to 1536, Chapuys was in communication with nobles who would become key players, but what of his involvement during the actual events of 1536?

The ambassador devoted considerable time to analysing the cause, which he reported was the tax on religious houses. Taxes had caused similar uproars in years past, but even in its early stages there was a decidedly different feel. The rebellion suited his purpose, but Eustace was an observer; he refused to become involved, as he reported that the rebels were disorganised, underfunded and reckless.[32] Yet we have a record in the archives in Brussels of a verbal report that belies this assessment of the rebellion. Philippe Chapuys was sent to Mary of Hungary to secretly convey his uncle's true assessment of the situation. The report is the account of Phillipe's speech to Mary and her councillors. The nuance of his speech is similar to that of his uncle, though perhaps less polished, but both men seem be throwing caution to the wind:

> On Tuesday after more than 10,000 persons met together

well armed, who that day and afterwards took and still take the gentlemen of the country, making them swear to be loyal to God, the King, and the Common wealth.

And now, Madame, it appears to him who has sent me to your Majesty, that considering the said troubles and that they fish well in troubled water, the time is come (and no such opportunity could be looked for in 100 years) to take revenge upon the Schismatic for all his intrigues with the French against the Emperor, and the indignities he inflicted upon your aunt, and the innumerable iniquities he has committed against the patient Princess, to restore whom to her rightful estate would require but part of the army which was prepared in Zealand, [the coast of Denmark] and that it should land in the river which goes up to York with 2,000 arquebusiers and some ammunition, which is what they are most in need of.[33]

This was a call to arms and request for urgent ammunition for the rebels: Eustace was ever the opportunist. Such an explosive request could only be delivered in person; even Cromwell would have been hard-pressed to ignore such a letter. As far back as February 1536, Chapuys had been reporting that the English were dissatisfied with the religious innovations enacted by Henry in Parliament. He reported that 'I think if the provision from Rome [Henry's excommunication] had been long ago executed it would have caused some commotion, for the people are daily in more and more despair, only hoping for some help from abroad'.[34] He also remarked that the people called Henry a 'Diabolical King'.[35]

The Duke of Norfolk, whose religious alliance lay with the men now leading the revolution, was forced into the role of executioner. Chapuys had aptly surmised that neither the Duke of Norfolk nor his colleagues in command wished for a fight, being good Christians.[36] What Norfolk felt about his role we can only guess.

A month later, Chapuys wrote to Charles's empress, Isabella, suggesting that the time was ripe for Reginald Pole to return to England, presumably to overthrow Henry.

The rebellion continued to gather momentum and the rebels were no longer a disorganised band of misfits. They now had a leader, the charismatic and highly intelligent Robert Aske, who finally issued Henry with demands. Firstly Henry was to halt his suppression of the monasteries and restore what had been destroyed. Mary was to be reinstated as heir (without any male progeny Henry had no legal succession – he had disinherited them all), the architects of Henry's religious program, namely Cromwell, and Thomas Audley were to be executed, or at the very least exiled, and lastly, Cranmer and the other evangelical bishops

were to be burned as heretics.[37]

Henry never responded well to demands of concession and sacrifice.

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Chapuys reported that Jane's coronation, which was understood to have taken place at the end of October, was postponed until June 1537, but he was sceptical that it would ever happen – at least until Jane did her duty. Chapuys seemed relieved by the news that Jane was not yet pregnant, but he was anxious that Mary might not be allowed at court until the coronation, which was the original plan. However, everything was put on hold as Henry gathered his family at court, and the ambassador finally had the pleasure of seeing Mary in person after several years.

The ambassador received communications in January and February of 1537 regarding marriage negotiations between Mary and Dom Luiz of Portugal, and made overtures to Henry for the alliance. Thomas Wyatt, Henry's ambassador at Charles's court, was instructed to ascertain whether Chapuys' assurances at court were genuine.[38]

In March, Charles despatched Diego de Hurtado Mendoza, the son of Chapuys' predecessor, to England to meet with Chapuys, who would introduce him to Jane.

> You will also consult with Our resident ambassador as to the best means of putting into the Princess' hands, without raising suspicion, the letters you have for her, in which We recommend and exhort her to keep firm as regards the said marriage, and say that We shall always take care of her affairs as if she were Our own daughter. Mind, the letters are two; one in the hand of Our secretary, to be given to her in public; the other in Our own, to be delivered in private.[39]

If Henry became difficult and rejected the marriage proposal for Mary, Mendoza was to consult Chapuys as to how to handle the situation.

We are without the actual letters, but it appears that Charles was at times ruthless in regards to Jane, despite the fact that her being in power benefitted Mary. Charles referred to her in several despatches as Henry's mistress rather than queen, and speculated as to whether Henry would marry again, as Jane had so far failed to provide an heir. 'Should the King wish to marry again, you are not to oppose him provided he is in earnest, and his marriage advantageous for the advancement of the present negotiation; for neither Our cousin nor We can possibly prevent him from doing so, if he chooses.'[40] Chapuys was instructed to persuade Henry and Cromwell of the merit of a marriage between Mary and Dom Luiz, pointing out that the match was 'one whom the [present] mistress and her adherents ought to fear

the less, inasmuch as England and Portugal have always been good neighbours, and one has nothing to apprehend from the other'.[41]

In May and June, we have only allusions to Chapuys' activities. On Mary of Hungary's instructions, Chapuys became involved in several disputes between Flemish and English merchants,[42] Mendoza arrived in June, and both men had audiences with Cromwell and the Privy Council regarding marriage negotiations, and that same month, a reference is made to Chapuys' servant, a man named George Pery, who took charge of transporting four horses from France for Cromwell's nephew Richard.[43]

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The rebels had hitherto remained out of Henry's reach, but their leader, Robert Aske, and his fellow conspirators would make a fatal mistake by trusting Henry's word. Henry made peace overtures to the rebels, and invited Aske to court that Christmas to present his complaints. All seems to have gone well. Henry made wonderful promises and treated Aske as a dear friend. Aske left court satisfied, with a message of peace from the king and a promise of Jane's coronation in York; he had also agreed to a parliament in the North to decide any further religious matters. However, Henry was saved from having to follow through on his promises. Within weeks a small ragtag revolt sprang up in the North. Although it had nothing to do with Aske, it gave Henry an excuse to renege on his promises to the rebels, arrest Aske, Lord Darcy and Lord Hussey, along with dozens of rebels and execute them all. Aske was hung in chains from Clifford's Tower in York until he died on 12 July 1537. The French ambassador reported that Jane had originally pleaded for the men's lives, but Henry had dismissed her, warning her not to interfere with his affairs. Chapuys' letters regarding the incident are not to be found. His reports, if they are ever to be discovered, may well allude to his disappointment that his visions of Reginald Pole storming the English coast, defeating Henry and sweeping Mary off her feet, had come to nothing. The mass executions, however, tainted what should have been tremendous news, which all of England had been anticipating: Jane was pregnant.

The pregnancy progressed well and on 11 October she went into labour and gave birth to a boy. Jane had secured her position, and rewarded Henry's love and investment, succeeding where her predecessors had failed. England erupted in triumph. Despite the fact that Mary was now further from the throne, Chapuys was pleased that Jane had shown Mary particular favour by summoning her to join her during her months of confinement, and Mary had pride of place as godmother of the new Prince Edward.

But Henry and Jane's joy was short-lived. On 24 October, Jane

died from complications of childbirth. The long hours of labour had wreaked havoc on her body, and we believe septicaemia set in. Henry had his heir, but he had lost his beloved queen. Again, we have no letters from Chapuys relating the events. However, other accounts suggest Henry was utterly devastated. Mary's grief at Jane's death was evident. She kept to her rooms, and only emerged as chief mourner at the royal funerary procession through London.

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Henry's reluctance to marry for some time after Jane's death strongly suggests a grief-stricken man.

However, Henry wasn't just a man; he was now a king without a queen, and once again he had to enter the marriage ring. Both Charles and Francis assumed that, at last, Henry would consider a suitable royal bride who would secure relations with either party. But this was Henry and his marriages were never so straightforward. Perhaps the first obstacle was Henry's own reputation with eligible women; there were almost no candidates willing to step forward.

Henry then quickly compounded his problems, offending the French by demanding Francis send him noblewomen for a line-up. We can imagine Chapuys' wryly amused report of such a suggestion, but naturally the request was refused.

By January 1538, Henry was leaning towards a marriage alliance with France. The French ambassador Louis de Perreau, Sieur de Castillon, suggested that this was due to Henry's assumption that a French alliance would cost him less, but no serious candidates were found.[44] In the midst of another marital crisis, Chapuys' letters recommence as suddenly as they disappeared at the end of 1536, without any indication that he had taken a break or had left the country. His letters restore dimension and colour to Henry and his court.

For the last year, the few reports from the Imperial embassy had come from Don Diego Hurtado Mendoza, who was now assisting Chapuys in negotiations. The difference between the two styles of embassy is striking. Chapuys was a man of the people; he had no rank to preserve, nothing to distinguish him from merchants and nobles alike. He prided himself on being a bridge between both worlds. His writing transcended politics; there is that undeniably human element to his words. However, Mendoza, like his ambassador father, remained removed from the court; he had no interest in cultivating such relationships. He sniffed at the nobility and their culture. Where Chapuys delved into their psyche, Mendoza kept away. In short, Mendoza preserved his sense of rank, and as a result his despatches are without the details and the texture that bring the period to life.

Nothing in England appealed to Mendoza. Particularly prominent

in his letters are his complaints about London, Henry, the weather and the English in general.

> There has been no warm weather this winter, I am as frozen and dead with it as if I had been living in Russia. On the other hand, the sanitary conditions of this place have not improved, and therefore, as a man tutored by experience, at each stroke of the bell, I take your [Charles's] advice and fly fifteen miles hence. Should there be an opportunity to favour us, I beg and entreat your Signory [Charles] to think of my colleague [Chapuys] and of me; of him because he has already done good service, and of myself that I may have wherewith to serve in future.
>
> This king has invited my colleague and myself to a banquet at Antoncurt [Hampton Court], to see the Prince, his son … I must confess that, although this is pretty good living for one who is somewhat used to it, I would much prefer being at Barcelona.[45]

Had Chapuys written such a letter, a rebuff would have been inevitable, but Charles mollycoddled his sensitive ambassador.

When an outbreak of plague hit, Charles anxiously suggested that Mendoza drop what he was doing and flee for safer areas; Chapuys had never received such concern. Mendoza had planned to depart England by the end of August, which he anticipated with unconcealed joy. He had asked for a recall. Charles not only immediately granted Mendoza's request (whereas he had refused to do so for Chapuys), but also sent money to cover any debts he had incurred.[46] The men were invited to a final dinner with Henry and his councillors, during which Henry grilled Mendoza about his embassy. Chapuys had grown accustomed to Henry's direct approach and had developed masterful ways in which to deflect his enquiries, but Mendoza floundered. He seemed to dislike Henry, finding him brutish, and he wasn't alone. The French ambassador, Louis de Perreau, confided in Chapuys and Mendoza prior to the latter's departure. In response to Henry's request that the French bridal prospects be brought to him for inspection, Castillon had told him frankly that such a demand was impossible. Henry responded violently, roaring that Castillon had no right to use such language (i.e. to disagree) with him, and in any case it was of no matter, he would soon be master of Milan. Chapuys was unfazed; it was Henry to a T.[47]

Henry's violent temper manifested itself once more that month. On 29 August Henry sent Geoffrey Pole, Reginald's brother, to the Tower, along with Henry Courtenay, for secret correspondences with Reginald without Henry's permission. In December, Henry Pole (another of Reginald's brothers), Henry Courtenay, Edward Neville and Nicholas Carew were executed for treason. To the keen observer, the executions effectively stamped out rival claimants to the throne. Chapuys,

however, saw a different connection: they were all supporters of Mary.

The political uncertainty of 1536 had returned. On 1 February 1539 Charles and Francis forged an alliance. It was this factor that finally, after almost a decade, secured Chapuys' recall. Charles's ambassador in Rome used the new alliance to insist that Charles and France work together, remove their ambassadors (who could be used as potential hostages) and invade England. It was also suggested that Mary leave with Chapuys. It was utterly fanciful, which is why the recall of both the Imperial and French embassies from England is so peculiar.

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Henry begged Charles to arrange a set of marriages: Mary to Dom Luiz and Henry himself to Christina, Duchess of Milan, Charles's niece. Henry requested that Mary of Hungary travel with her niece Christina to Calais so that he could meet her.

On 25 February Chapuys reported that Henry was insisting on viewing Christina before a marriage could be concluded, but he was careful to distance himself from Henry's instructions, knowing how ridiculous the instructions must have sounded to Mary of Hungary. Christina of Milan was Henry's favourite candidate, but Mary would hardly agree to send Christina to be appraised. Instead, Hans Holbein, Henry's most prized court artist, was sent to paint Christina's portrait, and returned with a portrait that so pleased Henry that he became enamoured of her, the same sort of infatuation Chapuys had seen before.[48] Perhaps marriage negotiations had whetted Henry's appetite.

Chapuys reported that Henry was enjoying the company of a young lady who had served Jane just prior to her death – Anne Bassett. Chapuys and Mendoza were cordial with the new flame, going so far as to present her with venison and wine. It was unusual for Chapuys to pay so much attention to a mistress, but he made it clear that he fully expected a marriage announcement. Considering the lengths to which Henry was going to keep his young mistress happy, including banquets and feasts for her amusement and small getaways to Dover, it is hardly surprising.

Chapuys wrote, with a degree of incredulity, that Henry had suggested himself as a mediator between Charles and Francis in peace negotiations. Henry told the ambassadors that neither monarch had any reason to distrust him. Cromwell was then used to spin a complex tale of intrigue and betrayal: France was conspiring against Charles and attempting to involve Henry. Chapuys, knowing Cromwell as he did, suspected he and Mendoza were being drawn into revealing Charles's true thoughts on both Francis and Henry. He also felt they were being used to promote jealousy and discord with the French.[49] Chapuys saw Henry and Cromwell's behaviour as 'artfully designed,

for the express purpose of arousing the jealousy of the French and making their own profit out of it'.[50]

Mary of Hungary trusted Chapuys' assessment, and advised him to proceed, sending him money (which Charles often neglected to do) in order to ease his situation. Mary understood the importance of his network and more importantly what Chapuys needed to sustain it: 'It is now for you to let me know in conformity with your ambassadorial duties how political matters stand.'[51]

The ambassadors also had the opportunity to see all of Henry's children. Chapuys wrote that the young Prince Edward was 'one of the prettiest children of his age that could be seen any where'.[52]

The ambassadors also noted Elizabeth's beauty, without any reference to her heritage or lineage. However, it was Mary whom Chapuys was most anxious to introduce to Mendoza. The men visited her at Richmond, where Chapuys reported they stayed 'a good many hours talking with her, and hearing her play on the lute or the spinet in so admirable a manner that I really believe she is the most accomplished musician that could be found'.[53]

Unfortunately Mary's marriage negotiations had stalled. Chapuys reported in May that Henry had begun to turn Mary against Charles to a degree, and he was worried that Mary had begun to distrust her cousin. Even more distressing to Chapuys was Mary's discernible coolness towards him, a by-product of Henry's influence. The idea of getting Mary out of England was, for reasons unknown to us, still on the table, but Mary's attitude was a far cry from her previous enthusiasm. When the subject was again broached, she was non-committal, declaring that her approval would depend on the circumstances. She was banking on her father's favour. For the man who had put Mary above everything else, it was personal blow.[54]

It was also perhaps a slightly bitter parting gift. Chapuys would be recalled between March and April 1539. After ten years of lengthy, lively and detailed correspondence from Chapuys' first embassy to England, the change from his correspondence to that of his temporary successor Phillip Maioris, Dean of Cambray, is not noticeable. Chapuys would miss the changes in English politics during this period, but he would certainly have approved.

Mary

The Princess is adored, as she well deserves it, by the whole nation.

Chapuys, 1533

The narrative of Chapuys' diplomatic life is that of two embassies. The first was dominated by Katherine, Mary, Anne and Cromwell. Chapuys' second embassy would centre on Henry's last three wives, Anne of Cleves, Catherine Howard and Katharine Parr. The common factor to both was Mary. Between the two embassies there is an interlude, during which we can explore two unique and complex relationships in Chapuys' life: Cromwell and Mary.

As we have seen, Chapuys' relationship with Mary was, from the first, loyal, affectionate, and unwavering. He was as devoted to her and her cause as he was to Katherine's. Chapuys guided and advised her through the maze of political intrigue that surrounded her at court, and fought tirelessly on her behalf while she was separated from her parents. Yet there has been a change in approach to their relationship over the last few decades, as Tudor personalities have been readdressed and rebalanced. For example, some Tudor historians have argued that Chapuys to some extent manipulated Mary.[1] David Loades suggests that Chapuys worsened Mary's predicament by encouraging her to become more vocal in her opposition to her father. He sees 'a deeper and more devious Chapuys'.[2]

It is possible that Chapuys manipulated Mary, he was after all her advisor and counsel, and in the eyes of Charles and the Pope, she was the legitimate heir to the throne. For example, in 1536 following Anne's death he advised Mary to capitulate to Henry. However, there is also evidence to suggest that Mary manipulated Chapuys. Certainly, we have evidence that Mary badgered the ambassador, often writing imploring letters to assist her at once. These letters show that she was as demanding as her mother when it came to asking Chapuys for help:

> Monsieur l'Ambassadeur. Although I am sure that, prompted by His innate virtue, goodness, and magnanimity, His Majesty has had due regard for the many and singular services which you, Chapuys, have, and are continually rendering him, yet I should feel it as one of the greatest mishaps of my sad fortune, were I not allowed time and opportunity to acknowledge those which for a considerable length of time you have rendered to the Queen, my mother, and to myself. Now more than ever those services on your part are urgently required. I would dare ask this favour of you, – that you despatch forthwith one of your men, an able one and possessing such information, to the Emperor, and inform him of the whole, and beg him … to take this matter in hand, and

provide a remedy for the affairs of this country.[3]

Mary also played on Chapuys' affection: 'She writes to me, she is daily preparing herself for death.'[4]

Such a dramatic declaration sent Chapuys into a panic. His advice to the young woman was cautious, as he knew that without Katherine's influence she relied solely on his guidance. Even before Anne's final miscarriage became known, the ambassador was already warning Mary that:

> Had she been delivered of a son, as both were almost sure would be the case, he would certainly have summoned the Princess to swear to the statutes. I do not know what he may do now. I have warned the Princess to consider whether, in case of her being much pressed to take the oath and thereby reduced to extremities, it would not be expedient for her to offer, the very moment the King, her father, had a son, to accede to his wishes, and in the meanwhile begin from this day to flatter and, make herself agreeable to the governess.[5]

Mary's survival was paramount and Chapuys would do all he could to ensure her succession, even if it meant from time to time putting words into her mouth. He advised her on what to say word for word when pressed by Henry's council to follow Elizabeth's household and take the Oath of Succession.

> I immediately sent to the Princess a protest drawn in due form for her to sign, and keep secret, declaring that neither by word nor deed, expressly nor tacitly, has she ever consented to anything that may prejudice her or her right. I have besides put down in writing several candid and temperate statements. She was to say from the very first that if the King, her father, wished it to be so, she submitted, but that she protested in due form against whatever might be done to her prejudice. These words I wrote down for her, she was to learn them by heart, and repeat them daily.[6]

The ambassador was so focused on reconciling Mary with Henry that he was willing to concede her title of princess, despite the fact that neither mother or daughter were in agreement. It is certainly difficult to reconcile this Chapuys – pragmatic and logical – with the closed and dogmatic Chapuys of popular history.

> I had likewise thought of another course to adopt in the Princess's case, namely, that after again making the most solemn and strong protests against the violence used towards her, and the apparent danger to her life in the place where she is now made to reside, she should write to the King, and offer to relinquish the title of Princess, provided she were allowed to live with the Queen, her mother.[7]

Mary was, in the ambassador's opinion, much softer than Katherine. She was without Katherine's edges – her battle-hardened stamina and stubbornness – but she was developing a thick skin. On Chapuys' advice, when dealing with Henry's council her course of action was different from that of her mother. Rather than fight them, she demurred, and instead wrote directly to her father, believing that cutting out the middlemen would bridge the gap between them. Chapuys understood that Mary had been caught in the crossfire between her parents. She felt that she owed her mother her loyalty, but she loved and admired her father equally.

We say that Chapuys encouraged Mary into taking her mother's side against her father; the evidence clearly shows Katherine was more than adept at doing this herself.

*

Elizabeth's birth effectively usurped Mary's position, but she was not made aware of her demoted status until she received a letter from Henry's Comptroller of the Household. Rather than taking Katherine's approach and addressing the issue head-on, she needled her father, suggesting that this was a mistake, and hoping he did not read the same letter.[8] Mary had not, to her knowledge at least, offended her father, and felt justified in signing this letter to her father – *Mary, Princess*.

Henry's callous response to his daughter resonates down the centuries; Mary had now 'arrogantly usurped the title of Princess' (despite having been one since her birth, and rather informally demoted), and Henry bluntly stated that she was illegitimate. Despite the fact that no court could decide as to whether Katherine had been a virgin when she married Henry, he had made the rather convenient decision for himself. Yet Henry went further, and sent the Duke of Norfolk to visit Mary at Beaulieu in December, to inform her that he desired her to go to court and serve her new half-sister, Princess Elizabeth. Chapuys' letter at this juncture bears all the hallmarks of a frustrated and furious ambassador. He refers to Elizabeth as a bastard, rather than Henry's other daughter, and stubbornly calls Mary 'princess'.The ambassador indignantly recounted Mary's audience with Norfolk, in which she more or less complied with her father's orders to join Elizabeth's household.[9]

Mary's behaviour suggests the advice she was receiving from Chapuys favoured her capitulation. Chapuys' chief worry was that Mary would press her father and go too far, as he truly feared for her safety.[10] Mary would never consent, however, to wait upon the child of the woman who had usurped her mother's place, and the child who had usurped hers.[11] As early as 1533, Chapuys was seriously considering getting Mary out of the country. He feared that Henry, in

a rage, would have her executed (which in hindsight wasn't too wild an idea), or that she would fall victim to Anne and her faction. For a time Mary was fixated on the idea, to the extent that Chapuys reported to Charles that if he were to advise her to cross the Channel in a sieve she would do it.

In mid-January 1534, Henry took a small retinue of men – comprising Cromwell, William Fitzwilliam (Henry's treasurer), and Sir William Kingston, Captain of the Guard and Constable of the Tower of London – to visit Hatfield, and force Mary at last into submission. This particular visit has evolved historically into a rather dramatic and emotional confrontation between father and daughter, which, according to some sources, served to ignite Anne's rage and jealousy. Chapuys' report, however, paints a different portrait of the king and his eldest daughter. That Anne had little faith in Henry's backbone when it came to Mary is hardly surprising; he continued to have a soft spot for his daughter.

> The Lady Anne, knowing well the king's weakness, and fearing that the great beauty, virtue, and wisdom of the Princess might lead her father to forget his anger … sent hastily to the King, first of all, Cremuel and after him other messengers, to prevent him from speaking to or seeing the Princess.[12]

Any hopes Mary had of seeing her father face to face were dashed. He visited his second daughter in the nursery, and Mary was met instead by Cromwell, Fitzwilliam and Kingston, who attempted to force her to acknowledge that she was no longer a princess. Chapuys reported that she repeated the sentiments expressed in her letter to her father, but it was clear that Henry was her focus; she wanted to see him. Mary sent word to the king, at the other end of the palace, begging to be allowed to see him and kiss his hand, but Henry coldly refused. Nothing accomplished, he and the men returned to their horses, but Mary, knowing the power of tableaux, moved quickly and ran up the steps of one of the towers to the roof overlooking the courtyard. By sheer chance or some other engineering, Henry turned and glanced up to see his eldest daughter, head bowed and hands clasped together: the very image of supplication and piety.

If we are to believe some reports, Henry was moved to tears, causing Anne to berate him further. Yet Chapuys, who would have loved nothing more than to see such affection, instead reported that it was a cold and indifferent Henry, who merely nodded and turned away, his thoughts perhaps already on London. The household, however, bowed reverently, 'expressing as well as they could their good will and sympathy for her'.[13]

The ambassador's main concern throughout this period was the question of negotiating a marriage for Mary. Yet Chapuys speculated

that Henry would not risk marrying her to a foreign suitor: 'The King has not said a word … he knows very well that, were he to marry her out of England, he might be considerably annoyed afterwards; whereas, having her by him, prisoner as it were, she cannot raise her head or go against his will.'[14]

Chapuys' observation was valid: why would Henry risk marrying his daughter to a foreign power, which could in turn lay claim to the English throne via Mary's bloodline?

Anne suspected that Mary was receiving secret advice from the Imperial ambassador, and took her frustrations out on her husband, whom she accused of not having a tight enough hold on his elder daughter.[15]

Rumours swirled through the court that Anne, and even Henry, perhaps trying to appease his wife, were plotting to poison Mary. Chapuys was not entirely convinced by the rumours, but he reported them and, unusually, named his source: Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland:

> Not more than six days ago, the earl of Northumberland said to a gentleman, who came and told me, that he knew for certain that Anne had been thinking of having the Princess poisoned; and I must observe that the earl must know something about it, owing to his intimacy and credit with the said Anne.[16]

Mary wrote to Chapuys in the last days of February 1534. Isolated in a household dedicated to her half-sister, she had no visitors and no communication with either of her parents. The ambassador reported that Mary had very few dresses, and sent a messenger to her father begging for a wardrobe, but, stubbornly, she insisted that any orders or money sent to her had to address her as princess. It came as little surprise, then, that Mary found herself devoid of suitable dresses within a few months. Anne showed some signs of wishing to reconcile with her daughter-in-law, but Chapuys questioned her timing: why, after so long, was Anne interested in repairing such a fractious relationship, and, knowing Mary as she did, what did she truly hope to achieve?

> The King's mistress, having gone to visit her daughter, sent a message to the Princess, requesting her to visit and honour her as Queen which she was. Should she comply, she would be as well received as she could wish, and it would be the means of her regaining the good pleasure and favour of the King, her father.[17]

Mary's response must have come as no surprise: 'The Princess's answer was, that she knew not of any other queen in England than Madame, her mother; and that should the King's mistress, as she called Anne de Bolans do her the favour she spoke of, and intercede with the King, her father, she would certainly be most grateful to

her.'[18]

Anne's olive branch was short; upon hearing Mary's answer she responded in kind, heatedly turning to threats instead.[19]

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After Katherine's death, Chapuys reconstructed his embassy, focusing solely on Mary. Plans to get her safely out of England had been in place before Katherine's death, and Chapuys stood at the centre of it all. It is at this juncture that an interesting attempt at subterfuge emerged in Chapuys' letters. After the first reference to this escape plan, Chapuys began to suggest it could not succeed. As the weeks wore on, he was openly more pessimistic, even mentioning in a letter three weeks after Katherine's death that the opportunity had slipped away entirely, but he insisted that he was still looking into other options to get her safely out of England. Chapuys, ever cautious, advised Charles that he would continue to assess the situation and improve his access to the princess by placing reliable servants in her household.[20]

However, we must question why Chapuys made quite so much fuss about this escape plan. Had he suspected that his letters were being intercepted by Cromwell? If so, his assurances that he was looking at other (and unnamed) options to spirit Mary out of England and may have been designed to spur Henry into improving Mary's situation. This is further supported in the same letter by Chapuys' declaration that he was planning to spread rumours to pressure Mary's keepers into treating her better.[21]

On 9 February, the messenger of Adrian de Crow, Count of Roeulx and member of the Imperial Low Countries Council of State, arrived in London to confer with Chapuys about the plans for Mary's escape. The next day, Chapuys reported that Katherine's confessor, Jorge de Athequa, Bishop of Llandaff, had failed in his attempt to escape England dressed as a sailor.[22]

As a precaution, Henry moved Mary to a place 40 miles from the sea; her chances of escape had faded even further. At least Chapuys could now report that Mary was now more comfortable and better attended in her lodgings. The same day, Mary found a letter in her chambers, left by her chambermaid almost ostentatiously. The letter spoke of her father, assuring her that she had nothing to fear from the king, or his plans for her.[23]

Mary's status, however, was still up in the air. Henry offered only one avenue through which Mary could hope to be restored to the succession: complete submission. To the ambassador's annoyance, Charles was on an entirely different page, and was still hoping that submission would be something Henry offered to the Pope. His letter to Chapuys must have raised an eyebrow from his ambassador, who

had a better grasp of Henry's stubbornness and complete lack of regard for the papacy. Charles advised his ambassador to suggest that he mediate between Henry and the Pope, but Chapuys was to frame his suggestion to Henry as if they had come entirely from him.[24] Chapuys knew that the best way to approach the matter was through Cromwell, but his actual approach was designed to benefit Mary, too. He pushed the issue of Mary's legitimacy, suggesting that Charles would form a treaty with Francis to secure it. They would adhere to the papal censures, which would surely push Henry to be more reasonable in Mary's case.[25]

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Chapuys displayed almost paternal excitement when bringing his colleague Mendoza to meet Mary in August of 1538. He was anxious that his colleague be impressed by her manners, beauty and grace, and spent some time describing their reactions. However, Mary's enthusiasm only extended as far as her cousin Charles. When quietly asked whether she would still consider leaving England, she demurred; it wasn't what Chapuys had expected. Chapuys would be in Brussels throughout most of Anne of Cleve's marriage to Henry, but he constantly badgered the English ambassadors at the Imperial court for news of Mary. When, in 1539, rumours circulated throughout Europe that Mary had been married off, Chapuys was relentless in his determination to discover the truth.

Chapuys' interventions and involvement in Mary's life stemmed as much from his emotional attachment as from his political agenda. Rash at times, even foolhardy, his determination to protect Mary without doubt kept her safe and, most importantly, alive.

Cromwell

Cromwell is witty and well versed in government affairs and reasonable enough to judge correctly of them.

Chapuys

The relationship between Charles's ambassador and Thomas Cromwell, Henry's vice-chancellor, was one of the most unexpected and complex relationships of Chapuys' life in England.

There were few men at court whom the temperamental ambassador could tolerate, and even fewer that he genuinely liked. Cromwell, a new negotiator on the scene in 1531, had been in the service of Cardinal Wolsey, and had passed with considerable ease from the fallen cardinal's side to the king's. From Chapuys' letters, a picture of Cromwell emerges; an astute man who had a rather disarming nature, evident in the many occasions on which those who spoke with him were induced to speak of things that should have been kept hidden. He was shrewd, distinguished, ambitious, highly intelligent, and adept at thinking outside the box. He was also pragmatic and practical, with keen attention to detail, and Chapuys often wrote about the sly glances and rogue smiles Cromwell gave when making a particularly witty or striking remark. Charles even became intrigued by the new power player, and insisted on knowing everything about him. The ambassador wrote to Charles at length about Cromwell's past, his own interest in this ambitious councillor evident.

In short, the qualities and skills that Chapuys finds in Cromwell are those we see the chancellor put to effective use in Henry's service.

How, then, did this radically lateral thinker connect with the religiously conservative ambassador? Those around the ambassador who had the same religious and political interests were not necessarily people he socialised with. Chapuys felt contempt for the old-fashioned Duke of Norfolk, a staunch Catholic with Imperial ties, and saw him as a man of limited courage and ability, who would do anything to remain in power. Chapuys found Henry frankly bewildering and eccentric. To Chapuys, a man who had spent his formative years in some of the most exciting and forward-thinking places in Europe, England must have seemed a provincial backwater.

Cromwell, however, was widely read and travelled; this they had in common, which helped to forge their rapport.

The two men were, despite the political and religious divide, congenial, and Chapuys found it easier to converse with Cromwell on the subject of politics. When they did lay diplomatic issues aside, they found a sincere pleasure in each other's company. They were both learned men and political realists, respecting the similarity of ideas

they saw in one another. They hunted together, dined together and lent each other books, sometimes walking in various palace gardens and discussing tapestries, art, scholarship, Italy (where they had both spent time), and wider European politics.[1]

The fact that Cromwell helped engineer the divorce and Katherine's usurpation tells us no more about his personal feelings than it does about his engineering of Anne's downfall years later. He was able to separate his personal feelings from political necessity and the obligation to satisfy Henry's demands – an ability with which Chapuys identified.

The ambassador knew well, from Cromwell's behaviour during Wolsey's fall and Anne's decline, how quickly and smoothly Cromwell changed horse. Regardless of Cromwell's remonstrations to Chapuys regarding Anne and the Boleyn faction, Chapuys suspected that Cromwell was only waiting for an opportunity to change his policy.[2] His suspicions would prove correct. It was because of this last particular piece of knowledge that Chapuys was constant in his attempts to persuade Cromwell to change allegiances from Anne to Katherine, and in 1533 believed he may have an opportunity to do so, following Anne's failure to bear a son. He had high hopes of 'making him [Cromwell] a good Imperialist'.[3] He soon despaired of this ambition, understanding that Cromwell had no intention of completely alienating the French in favour of Charles. Strange, then, that Chapuys took this rather to heart, complaining in a letter in 1533 that Cromwell's words 'seemed fair on the surface, but his acts were bad and his will and intentions even worse'.[4]

Yet Chapuys, himself a skilled diplomat, understood the necessity of keeping all embassies within reach in the never-ending game of international relations. Certainly the letter is scathing and emotional, betraying Chapuys in the sense that it indicates he was personally hurt, and was lashing out. Cromwell was (in this moment) unscrupulous, incalculable, and thus a danger to Katherine. Yet, Chapuys could not help but like him, and still preferred dealing with him than with anyone else at court. Both men employed the same sort of techniques of diplomacy; they were consummate professionals when it came to the art of dissimulation, constantly employing this technique with each other.

Cromwell had the measure of the ambassador early on, and we see on many occasions that he knew how to manage him. Chapuys was not above making veiled and not so veiled threats to certain members of court about a military intervention, and even to Henry himself. The reactions he invariably received from Norfolk included lengthy lectures which exasperated Chapuys, drawing on parallels with Constantine, King Arthur and the holy crusades. As we have seen,

Henry met these threats with indignant blustering and railing against Charles. Cromwell, however, knowing Chapuys well, understood how to handle him. Chapuys reported:

> I went the day before yesterday into the country to meet Cromwell, who was hawking, that I might confer with him and hear the news. After some talk the Queen's affairs became naturally the topic of our conversation, when the opportunity being at hand I failed not to repeat the representations which I had made on a previous occasion … In this way, and passing from one thing to another, Cromwell distinctly told me that should Your Majesty declare war against this kingdom it would be a very easy thing to destroy them [the English]; but Your Majesty (he said) could not be greatly benefitted by it, besides which it could hardly be expected that, having at other times received help and pleasure from this kingdom, Your Majesty would now willingly work for or consent to its ruin.[5]

In other words, the Emperor may have the power to ruin England if he wishes, but what good would that do the Emperor?[6]

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Religious issues were undoubtedly a sore point between the two, as Cromwell was a motivating force behind religious change. Yet it was not an obstacle to their friendship, as Chapuys had already developed friendships with reformists and humanist men of letters during his time in Geneva. Cromwell was one of the figureheads of English Protestantism, and, indeed, what he helped achieve between 1532 and 1540 survived Mary's determination to restore England to Catholicism, and would blossom under the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth. Chapuys was obviously opposed to the notion of Henry's supremacy over the English Church, and was not above blaming Cromwell for public attacks on the papacy. Referring to a fiery anti-papal sermon he had heard, Chapuys told Charles, 'this language is so abominable that it is clear it must have been prompted by the king or Cromwell, who makes this monk his right hand man in all things unlawful'.[7]

Cromwell, of course, had his own agenda, at least at first, for charming Chapuys, and providing him with gifts of venison, invitations to social events, and other small tokens of friendship. Cromwell was nothing if not pragmatic, and knew that war with the Holy Roman Empire was unthinkable. On the other hand, Chapuys was anxious that Henry not ally England with France against Charles and was receptive to these friendly overtures. They made use of each other:

> He [Cromwell] … ended by inviting me, in the King's name, to hunt in the royal parks whenever I pleased, adding that he

would give proper orders that I should be well received there, and insisted upon my not refusing the invitation, 'for (said he) it will please the King, and you will pass your time agreeably.' At last he could not help adding that it was fit and becoming for me to do so, in order that people might witness the favour I enjoyed with his master. There was no need for such declaration, for I knew very well what he was aiming at. He wanted people to believe that Your Majesty approved of everything they had done, and were doing.[8]

Despite these displays of friendship, seemingly so contrived, Chapuys often mentions in his letters that he and Cromwell were careful about meeting, so as not to arouse suspicion. This suggests there is a clear demarcation between Chapuys and Cromwell, the councillor and ambassador, and their private selves.

The ambassador adopted various approaches with Cromwell in an attempt to coax an alliance between the two powers. In 1533, Anne was at the pinnacle of her power, and Chapuys was all too aware that Henry's foreign policy leaned towards France, Anne's preference. Chapuys warned Henry and Cromwell not to alienate the Emperor:

> Friends, I said, could nowise be treated in this manner for fear of their becoming sworn enemies, whereas enemies might very well through kind treatment or otherwise be induced to become friends.[9]

Chapuys had quickly recognised that Cromwell was the true power behind the throne, and thus he relied on Cromwell to help promote an English alliance with Charles.

> Cromwell has certainly shown great affection for Your Majesty's subjects, as he generally does in every other thing that concerns them, which is a very good sign for the future, since, after all, it is he who really governs and conducts all matters here.[10]

One incident in March 1535 shows how men engaged with each other in political espionage and intrigue on behalf of their masters. Chapuys had assured the Chancellor in the past of Charles's love for Henry, and his commitment to an alliance with him over that of France. Yet the Imperial ambassador of the French court had in his possession a packet of letters which threw doubt on Chapuys' assurances.

He reported that Cromwell had unceremoniously handed him the same packet of letters, sent to him by the English ambassador in France, John Wallop. Cromwell theatrically requested that the surprised ambassador open the packet, some of which contained numerous letters written in cipher, in his presence.

> Sure as I was that the letter would contain nothing in plain

writing that could be qualified as offensive or injurious to this King, I had no objection whatever to have the packet opened in Cromwell's presence, and, therefore, proceeded to gratify him in that respect.

Cromwell made no mention of the cipher, but made a show of reading several other lengthy letters from the packet. 'After perusing, in my presence, several which he himself had received, he began to relate certain news contained in them, which, to judge from his countenance, seemed not at all unpleasant to him'.[11]

The letters revealed that Charles was receiving the French ambassadors at his court and dealing with Francis himself, although the letters suggested that a rapprochement had not unfolded as planned, hence Cromwell's amusement. Nevertheless, the fact that Charles had gone behind Henry's back had angered the king. If Charles wanted an alliance with him, Cromwell intimated, he would have to bring more to the table, and as a final stipulation, Henry would no longer consider Mary and Katherine in the terms of the treaty. It was an unexpectedly confrontational incident, but Chapuys was anxious to assuage Cromwell's suspicion. The ambassador chose to address Cromwell privately within a few days, assuring the chancellor that there was nothing in it, and that if he had heard these reports from the French as well they were no doubt embellished to make Henry jealous. Cromwell seemed appeased, but it was clear that their friendship was secondary to the wills (and foibles) of their masters.

Once Anne was out of the picture, there was certainly less intrigue. Following Jane's death in 1537, however, the game began again in earnest. With the arrival of Chapuys' colleagues, including Mendoza, the two men had to be more discreet in their dealings with each other. Letters recounting formal audiences usually have Chapuys off in a corner with Cromwell, while the others tackle Henry or anyone else present.

It was to Chapuys and his colleagues that Cromwell first mentioned a marriage negotiation concerning the Duchy of Cleves in Germany. At first, Chapuys believed Cromwell was considering a match between Mary and William, Duke of Cleves. As William was a Lutheran, the idea was abhorrent to Chapuys, and certainly would have been to Mary. Chapuys assumed that Cromwell was merely being provocative, and made it clear he was losing patience with these diplomatic games. 'I said to Thomas Cromwell "now is the time to take away the mask of dissimulation and proceed to business."'[12]

Chapuys could not have known just how entrenched the idea of a marital alliance between England and the Duchy of Cleves would become in Cromwell's mind. The chancellor saw an alliance with a

Protestant power as a way for Reformation England to strengthen its position against Catholic Europe and the Pope. As early as 1535 he had already predicted that Cromwell's interest in an alliance with German duchies was doomed to fail (though just how completely even he could not have known). Chapuys had several German merchants in his pay, and he was fully aware that Cromwell was attempting to negotiate with a new ally: the German Lutherans. These informants kept Chapuys up-to-date, and he was probably more knowledgeable about German politics than anyone on Henry's council. He wrote disparagingly of Henry's political tactics, reporting that 'anything this king can do to stir up Lutherans without much expenditure he will certainly attempt'.[13]

In Chapuys' eyes, the German Lutherans were not a power, but a hodgepodge of petty factions. They had no particular foreign policy and had little of value to offer England. Nothing came of Cromwell's plans for an alliance with Cleves at this juncture. At the same time, Charles and Francis were negotiating a marriage between their children which would effectively isolate England and place the realm in serious danger.[14] Pope Paul had also expressed a strong desire for 'an enterprise against England', in which the French and Imperial ambassadors in Rome conveyed an interest. In England the reaction was almost immediate. Thomas Wriothesley, now Henry's ambassador in Brussels, hastily reported that the port of Antwerp had been closed, Spanish merchants were leaving London, and Charles and Francis were preparing for war with England.

Both Francis and Charles recalled their ambassadors from England in early 1539, which signified the fragmented relationship between the monarchs. For such a seasoned diplomat as Chapuys to be recalled after a decade of successful negotiation, matters must have been dire indeed, but we can clearly follow the chain reaction that led to his departure. Mary of Hungary would provide an excuse; the recall was due to her need for Chapuys' expertise in marriage negotiations between Henry VIII and Christina, Duchess of Milan. England saw itself surrounded by threats, some real and others imagined. The memory of Katherine was conjured up in the Low Countries as rumours spread of Spanish merchants seeing an opportunity to avenge her, and talk of anti-English sentiment was rampant through Europe.

The orders for Chapuys' recall were issued before he could be summoned for interrogation by Henry's councillors. Cromwell might have expected an explanation from his old friend, but Chapuys was unusually silent, perhaps because he was unsure of the drama unfolding. Henry did his utmost to delay Chapuys' departure, possibly on Wriothesley's advice; it made sense for Henry to hold Chapuys hostage until the English ambassadors returned safely. At Mary's court

in Brussels, Wriothesley argued that England needed an Imperial ambassador to keep the line of communication open. However, Chapuys was among Charles's most prized ambassadors and the Emperor could not risk his being detained in a power play. Mary's solution was not to recall Chapuys but to replace him with someone less valuable: the inexperienced Phillip Maioris who was unsuited for the job. Wriothesley's advice to Henry came back to bite him; Chapuys played the same card, insisting that Mary keep Wriothesley hostage until Chapuys was allowed to return. The move panicked Wriothesley, who wrote to Cromwell that he wished Henry would 'fall in love now with Chapuis and keep him there'.[15]

It was now Chapuys' turn to regret his past actions, as Wriothesley reminded Cromwell of the suspicion surrounding Chapuys' involvement and correspondence with the rebels of the Pilgrimage of Grace. On those grounds, Wriothesley encouraged Cromwell to detain Chapuys, but it must be a friendly detainment – a fact which he stressed twice in the same letter.

At last, however, Mary of Hungary's suggested replacement for Chapuys, Phillip Maioris, arrived in Calais, allowing Chapuys to finally depart England. The two met sometime after midnight, and Chapuys advised the novice ambassador to await further instructions from Mary before departing for Dover. Chapuys had already begun the task of smoothing over the incident which resulted in a joint hostage situation. Mary had argued previously that Chapuys was being ill housed and mistreated while the English waited for Wriothesley's return, but now Chapuys assured Maioris that it hadn't been the case. Mary had 'misunderstood' him.

There was no time for farewells between the ambassador and Cromwell, an unsatisfying end to their friendship – they would never come face to face again.

In May 1539, Parliament passed the Act of Six Articles, indicating Henry's return to conservative theology after his brief sojourn in the realm of evangelism. Cromwell, however, successfully engineered a treaty between Henry and William of Cleves, who happened to be Charles V's main rival for control of the Netherlands. This treaty, Cromwell's moment of triumph, culminated in Henry's fourth marriage to William's sister, Anne of Cleves, on 6 January 1540.[16]

Chapuys was still keeping a close eye on affairs in England, and seemed keen to restore his relationship with Cromwell and presumably Henry. Stephen Vaughan wrote to Cromwell that Chapuys met with English ambassadors on 14 January 1540 in Brussels, where Chapuys was serving Mary of Hungary. Vaughan reported that Chapuys anxiously asked after Mary, and whether she had been married to the Duke of Bavaria. Chapuys also met with Thomas Wyatt

on the 22nd, and Wyatt reported to Cromwell that Chapuys seemed eager to excuse himself for his hasty departure, and was anxious to distance himself from Aske and other leaders of the Pilgrimage of Grace. 'He professeth, with great oaths, the King's good service and true intent in the place that he was in, wherein he showed me of the accusation that Aske had made against him and of his innocence therein.'[17]

Why, in 1540, was Chapuys so eager to rectify a situation that had imploded years before? There is no evidence that Chapuys had any inclination to return to England, especially when we consider his constant pleas for recall. Now in his fifties, surely Chapuys was looking towards a quiet retirement. However, Cromwell's new alliance with Cleves was enough to cause concern for Charles. Chapuys, well aware of Cromwell's constant desire to ally with the German dukes, knew better than to completely burn his bridges with the potential English allies. He would have to start by repairing the damage done to his relationship with Cromwell and, through him, Henry. Chapuys' visits to Wyatt and the other English envoys in Brussels increased; he becomes a frequent feature of their letters, and is described with unusual informality. Wyatt also suggests that he knew more than Chapuys:

> Chapuys the other day said, smilingly, that they divined that the duke of Norfolk had come to France to put [create] jealousy between the French king and the Emperor … He seems loathe to return into England, and is not yet despatched, but Grandvela [de Granvelle] told Wyatt he would he [Chapuys] were there already.[18]

To be indispensable was truly a double-edged sword.

For the first few months of 1540, Chapuys remained in Brussels, but, apart from his personal letters to his mother, our information is sketchy at best. In England, Maioris proved to be embarrassingly ineffectual. The contrast with Chapuys was stark, as was that between Maioris and the new French ambassador Charles de Marillac. De Marillac not only rang rings around, him, but would become one of Chapuys' most irritating adversaries. The two had not yet met early in 1540, but de Marillac still suspected Maioris was sorely lacking: 'He is always armed with two maxims against questions. One is to profess ignorance, and the other is to say nothing.'[19]

The storm that had raged over Pope Paul's suggested invasion of England in 1538–9 had passed by 1540. England should have been looking to an alliance with either nation, perhaps secured by a marriage. Unfortunately Cromwell had moved impressively quickly: Henry and Anne of Cleves had already been married for several months, binding England with Cleves. However, Henry quickly

became dissatisfied with his new wife and furious with Cromwell for trapping him in the alliance. A furious monarch was dangerous for any advisor.

On 18 April, Cromwell was elevated to the Earldom of Essex and Grand Chamberlain, and Chapuys expressed his pleasure at the promotion, remarking that it was well deserved. The English ambassadors in Brussels conveyed his pleasure to Cromwell: 'Monsieur Chapuis seemed to me not a little to rejoice of your late honourable preferment, judging you right worthy the same.'[20]

Rumours had already abounded that Chapuys was preparing to return to his post in England, and we can assume he would not have been adverse to renewed ties with Henry's first minister. However, Wyatt suspected he was not too enthusiastic about returning to the post. Nevertheless, on 27 April, Wyatt reported that

> Chapuys has just come to inform me that the Emperor wished to send him to your Highness again, but he pleaded age and ill health, and Granvelle, knowing both his good mind to serve you, and his principal disease, though he is wonderfully brought low by sickness, bade him put in writing such plate and other things as he required for his master's honour, and he would obtain it for him. I also encouraged him, and he seemed to lack no good will if he were properly furnished.[21]

Despite his illness, Chapuys was to return to England, and by 27 June it was reported to be within days. Any hopes of a cautious renewal of friendship between Cromwell and Chapuys came to nothing, as Cromwell's downfall was well underway while Chapuys was still in Europe. On 10 June, Cromwell was escorted to the Tower. Of the first accusations against him,

> the substance was that the King, wishing by all possible means to lead back religion to the way of truth, Cromwell, as attached to the German Lutherans, had always favoured the doctors who preached such erroneous opinions and hindered those who preached the contrary, and that recently, warned by some of his principal servants to reflect that he was working against the intention of the King and of the Acts of Parliament, he had betrayed himself and said he hoped to suppress the old preachers and have only the new, adding that the affair would soon be brought to such a pass that the King with all his power could not prevent it, but rather his own party would be so strong that he would make the King descend to the new doctrines even if he had to take arms against him.[22]

Clearly Henry was using Cromwell to distance himself from the political and religious policies his chancellor put in place, albeit with Henry's agreement. Cromwell, much like Anne Boleyn years prior, had

alienated both the nobles at court and foreign powers. His death then, like Anne's only four years prior, would pave the way for new alliances.

Chapuys' previous tenure as ambassador had been steeped in the divorce crisis. His next mission in 1540 was again one of *douceur et amitié*, sweetness and friendship. On 12 July, Chapuys was at last on his way.[23] Charles was no doubt relieved that his most trusted ambassador was once more his eyes and ears. So, too, are historians, who have had to endure months of scant reports in the Spanish Calendar. Chapuys' return sweeps the pages once more, his words a welcome injection of life and colour, a respite from the lifeless reports by his replacement. Chapuys was, of course, well known at court (or notorious in some factions), but his knowledge of Henry and his councillors was a tactical advantage. He would have recognised many of the faces that greeted him upon his return, but he would have felt the absence of the shrewd and intelligent Cromwell? What he truly thought, however, we shall never know, as we have no letters mentioning Cromwell's downfall. Charles de Marillac, the French ambassador at Henry's court, reported that Chapuys found a meagre reception, as he was scarcely liked.[24] He also remarked that he was told 'The Imperial ambassador will no longer find his Cromwell to warrant the follies that entered his head once.'[25] Clearly Henry and his ministers had been aware of the close relationship between the two, and even suspected that Cromwell protected the ambassador.

De Marillac and the court were already dismissing Chapuys as broken, old and useless.[26] Yet Henry and his councillors had underestimated Chapuys before. Had Cromwell still been in power, he would have likely advised Henry not to make the mistake a second time.

Violent Imprints

He [Henry] will go on dipping his hands in blood, from which no good can come in the end.

Charles de Marillac, January 1541

The Tudor landscape, always a quicksand of shifting alliances and religious upheaval, had taken on a more dangerous cast by the time Chapuys returned to England in July 1540. Henry had dispensed not only with his fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, but with his most trusted minister, Thomas Cromwell. We have seen Chapuys in Brussels in the first months of 1540, but we must backtrack a little in this chapter to explore what he could not report on; Cromwell's downfall and Anne of Cleves' marriage.

Anne of Cleves is one of Henry's more elusive wives. Without Chapuys' constant observations during her six months of marriage, our first glimpses of her on English soil are limited to the negative assessment of Henry himself. He took an immediate and intense dislike to her, calling her a 'Flanders Mare', which suggests a wide-girthed, ungainly woman. Chapuys was still in either Brussels or the Netherlands when she arrived in England, and some reports from this period have at times been erroneously attributed to him. Perhaps they sometimes resembled Chapuys' witty style. However, they were written by the new French ambassador, Charles de Marillac.

De Marillac was an acerbic observer of the Tudor court in late 1539 to 1540. Although a good twenty years younger than Chapuys, de Marillac and Chapuys were in a sense two sides of the same coin. De Marillac was born in the commune of Aigueperse in the Auvergne, which in the sixteenth century was an important legal centre in France. Like Chapuys, de Marillac entered the legal profession, becoming a successful barrister in Paris, and was later admitted to the clergy.[1] Not only were their paths almost identical, de Marillac's father, Guillaume de Marillac, served the Duke of Bourbon, with whom Chapuys had been engaged in mediation years prior. It is not implausible that Chapuys had encountered Guillaume then.

De Marillac was suspected of supporting the reformed faith and owning heretical works. In a rather prudent move, he left France and accompanied his cousin, Jean de la Forêt, to Constantinople (now Istanbul) where Jean had been appointed the first French ambassador to the court of the Ottoman sultan, Suleiman the Magnificent.

Following his cousin's death, de Marillac moved with little effort into the vacant position and remained ambassador to the Ottoman court until mid-1538. De Marillac excelled in his first diplomatic position, ingratiating himself at the Ottoman court. Like Chapuys, he came to the English court an outsider, a man with a broad, pan-

European education who no doubt found the Tudor court rather parochial. Like Chapuys, de Marillac admired Lady Mary and worked towards a marriage alliance with the Duke of Orleans. Yet perhaps the two men were too similar, for their relationship, which began as tensely cordial in mid-1540, plummeted to an absurdly vitriolic level, providing one of the more humorous elements of Chapuys' second embassy.

De Marillac's lively despatches fill the gap left by Chapuys' absence from England, and to them we must turn.

De Marillac's first record of Anne of Cleves paints a very different picture from that of Henry's 'Flanders mare'. Anne arrived at Rochester, less than 30 miles from Greenwich, and we have several accounts of the first meeting between bride and groom. The French ambassador reports a cordial first public meeting between Anne and Henry before Henry escorted his new queen back to Greenwich. Like Chapuys, de Marillac pays attention to personality, character, and dress.

> As far as one can judge, the new Queen is about thirty; she is tall and thin, of middling beauty, with determined and resolute countenance. She brings in her suite twelve or fifteen damsels as maids of honour, all dressed in the same fashion and with the same vestments (as to colour and cloth) which she herself wears —a thing which has seemed rather strange in this place.[2]

De Marillac proceeds to describe Anne's appearance on close inspection:

> In the opinion of those who have seen her close she is not so young as was at first thought, nor so handsome as people affirmed that she was. She is tall; her face and countenance reveal a certain steadiness of purpose and strong determination, which indicate a turn of mind and vivacity of wit more than sufficient to counterbalance her want of beauty. She brings in her suite from her brother's country [maids of honour who are] dressed in such coarse and unsightly garb that they would be considered ugly through it even had they any personal attractions.[3]

Charles Wriothesley and Browne were present when Henry, unable to contain his patience, rode to Rochester where Anne was recovering from her arduous journey. Henry was a hopeless romantic and, determined to act out a scene from his beloved chivalric tales, visited her unexpectedly and in disguise.[4] Anne was watching a bull-baiting on New Year's Day when six gentlemen, shabbily dressed, entered her rooms without introduction. Henry strode forward and took hold of her in a kiss before presenting her with a gift supposedly from the king. What was Anne to think of this brazen stranger? As far as she was concerned, he was to be rebuffed and ignored.[5] Mortified, Henry

and his men retreated quickly, only to re-enter formally dressed. Wriothesley only reports that Henry regained his pride and took Anne in his arms, escorting her into a private chamber.[6] Anthony Browne then ventured into the private chambers and reported that Henry's reception of Anne was cold and distant.[7]

Matters between Henry and Anne would not improve. Nor would those between Henry and Cromwell, who had facilitated the marriage. Henry, now almost fifty, was unable to consummate the union and in his increasing agitation blamed his new wife whom he found repulsive.

Henry was in no position to turn away from a Cleves alliance – at least until April 1540, when rumours grew that Charles and Francis were drawing away from their own alliance, eager to secure alliances with England. William, Anne of Cleves' brother, beat Henry to the punch and began to solidify an alliance with the Emperor, marrying the woman Henry had desired as a bride, Christina, Duchess of Milan, as part of an agreement with Charles.[8] Henry on the other hand had his sights on an alliance once more with Francis. Considering the diverging paths now taken, what use was Henry's new wife in the scheme of things? Not only did he find her unattractive, she was also diplomatically irrelevant, and it was up to Cromwell to disentangle Henry from his marital problem.

During these weeks, Chapuys was preparing to return to England, assisted by his dear friend Anthoine Perrenot de Granvelle, who knew well that the ambassador's 'principal disease' was poverty.[9] Chapuys was indeed fortunate to have such a friend, and de Granvelle did everything in his power to ensure Chapuys would not experience the 'poverty' of his previous embassy.[10]

Chapuys had no reason to assume Henry's fourth marriage was not proceeding well. Publicly, it seemed to be a success, and Cromwell's elevation to Earl of Essex and Grand Chamberlain on 18 April 1540 seemed further evidence of Henry's satisfaction with the minister's choice of queen.[11]

Henry's rather mercurial stance on religion following the Dissolution of the Monasteries had created havoc. Henry had never truly adhered to a reformed faith; he was a religious conservative, but would not abide a papal master. This conflict was mirrored in the fractious relationships between religious conservatives and reformists among Henry's councillors. Several reformers whom Cromwell patronised, as well as his known friends, were arrested. Within weeks, Cromwell retaliated with a spate of arrests of his own, namely known conservatives such Lord Lisle, who met Anne of Cleves on her arrival in England. Cromwell himself was finally arrested, and sent to the Tower.

While Anne Boleyn received a trial, farcical though it was, Cromwell was not afforded even that dignity. For the crime of attempting a bold marital alliance for Henry, he was condemned by the Act of Attainder, on a number of trumped-up charges including heresy, treason and being rude and oppressive to the nobility of England.

Like Anne Boleyn, Cromwell had no foreign power to turn to; they washed their hands of him without hesitation. Charles hardly gave it a second thought, and Francis took grim satisfaction in the news.[12] Cromwell's fall provided Henry with a scapegoat, a way of disconnecting himself from previous English policy decisions, in favour of making new agreements or alliances without the 'barrier' of a mythological 'evil minister'.[13] Henry seems to have believed that only the death of someone close could bring about such a renewal.

Cromwell was kept alive long enough to fix the problem he had created and get Henry out of his marriage. Cromwell, as ever, was quick to comply with Henry's every demand. On 10 July, Henry informed his ambassador Pate, in Brussels, that Parliament had begun examinations of the validity of the Cleves marriage on the preceding Tuesday and had declared it null that day.[14] Two days later, Pate informed Norfolk that 'Shapuis is returning to England and was with Grandvela last night for his dispatch'.[15]

Chapuys arrived in London on 24 July, several days before Cromwell's execution. De Marillac had been waiting to catch a glimpse of the well-known, perhaps even notorious, Imperial ambassador, and took great care in conveying every minutia of his arrival.

> The Emperor's new ambassador, of whom I wrote in one of my late despatches, arrived here six days ago. He has met with a very meagre reception at this Court, where, to say the truth, he has scarcely any friends, for, if I am to believe what the King himself tells me, no one here esteems or likes him. The duke of Norfolk, who nowadays has the chief management of affairs, clearly shows his dislike of him.'[16]

De Marillac sized up the competition and, through his perhaps somewhat biased eyes, we see an older, more frail, Chapuys.

> The poor man has been for a long time so infirm and broken down, and is at present so weakened by disease, that people here think he has come to England purposely to make his last will, rather than to serve efficiently his master, the Emperor … he is unable to ride or walk, and can hardly stir out of doors, that being the reason why he has taken lodgings near me on the river side.[17]

It is a pathetic image of Chapuys, but was it true? De Marillac of

course wanted to believe the pitiful portrait, and crucially wanted Francis to buy it. For his part, Chapuys made it his mission to form some sort of rapport with the new French ambassador, an attempt that de Marillac appreciated. For the moment, de Marillac and Chapuys were willing to get along. De Marillac reported:

> I must not omit for duty's sake to mention a curious, and to me a most complimentary and gracious, behaviour on the part of the above-mentioned ambassador, which is, that without having previously informed anyone of his arrival in this country, he called on me, and said that he had mandate from the Emperor to communicate daily with me respecting political affairs in general, and more particularly those in which his master was engaged. I replied that I myself had a similar commission from France, and surely would not fail to impart to him the information or news I possessed, as I had already done to his predecessor in office. He has since called on me frequently, and I on him, to give these people to understand that our respective masters are great friends.[18]

We hear nothing from Chapuys throughout his first months back in London. Either his letters have been lost, or were delivered by word of mouth.

On 28 July, Thomas Cromwell was executed. This closed a chapter in the history of the Tudor court on another of Henry's devoted servants. We have no clear evidence that Chapuys attended the execution.

Henry had a penchant for selecting his new wives from the pool of ladies-in-waiting to his previous ones. He did so again, marrying seventeen-year-old Catherine Howard – on the day of Cromwell's execution.[19]

Any display of sympathy for Cromwell would have damaged Chapuys' negotiating abilities in England before his new embassy was even a week old. He kept a low profile and again began the tedious game of cultivating a network.

The gossipmongers at court were certainly active. For Norfolk, Henry and other councillors, with their eyes firmly set on alliance with France, Chapuys was a focus, even a target. Wrote de Marillac to Francis:

> As far as I can judge he [Chapuys] has more malice than cunning; there is no reason whatever to regret his having returned as the Emperor's ambassador to this country, where, I can assure you, he will make no way at all with this king or his ministers, for he is very much disliked by them, and more particularly by the duke of Norfolk, who has often spoken to me of his tricks and intrigues in past times, as well as of the cold and

ungracious answers he got whenever he made overtures in the Privy Council.[20]

De Marillac had not witnessed Chapuys at the pinnacle of his diplomatic career, and assumed the ambassador would remain a mere shadow of his former self. Gleefully, he reported that he had moved into Chapuys' former house in Stepney. In Chapuys' hasty departure from England in 1538, he had left behind a considerable number of reports, several of a delicate nature. De Marillac could not believe his luck:

> … wherein the Imperial ambassador himself formerly resided no less than nine years, a bundle of papers and minutes of his own despatches which he inconsiderately left behind him, when he ought to have kept it as carefully as the greatest treasure he possessed in this World. Should he come to know now that those documents and papers are in my hands, he would regret the more his having returned to this country; but I will carefully keep my own secret, and no one shall know a word about it unless you, Monseigneur, order me to reveal it.[21]

The documents had confirmed in de Marillac's mind the idea that Chapuys was unprincipled, malignant and determined to prevent an alliance with Francis, which was unconscionable in his mind. The first two accusations are, of course, biased speculation; the third was, in essence, the whole point of the Imperial embassy, as was the reverse for the Frenchman's embassy. De Marillac gossiped about the older ambassador with Henry, who assured him that Chapuys was no friend. Thus de Marillac was confident that Chapuys was shut out of the court, friendless. I do not dispute the fact that Chapuys had accrued many enemies at court during his tenure, but though Cromwell was gone, his ties with merchants and other informants remained, and he knew the nobles – whether they were his friends or foes – surrounding Henry, as well as Henry himself. Chapuys retained his aptitude for intelligence-gathering. For Charles, the value of his ambassador's knowledge and understanding of Tudor politics far outweighed his perceived unpopularity.

Perhaps Chapuys' court informants made him aware of de Marillac's dealings with Henry and Norfolk, for he now began to hold de Marillac at arm's length, which only incensed the French ambassador further.

Cromwell's execution had a ripple effect throughout the court. January 1541 saw the arrest of diplomat and poet Thomas Wyatt on charges of treason. Wyatt had been a close ally and confidant of Cromwell, and both Chapuys and de Marillac cited this as the true cause of his arrest. He had escaped execution in 1536, possibly due to Cromwell's intervention. With Cromwell out of the way, would Wyatt

escape once more? De Marillac made his disillusion with Henry's legal methods clear:

> No one will dare speak a word in his [Wyatt's] favour, and he will be judged by the fine laws of this country without listening to what he has to say in his own defence – nay, condemned and sentenced to death without his knowing what for.[22]

In retaliation for Wyatt's arrest, Cromwell's allies engineered the arrest of Sir John Wallop, ambassador to the French court, for alleged papal sympathies.[23] It was childish behaviour at best, but at worst it indicated just how fractious Henry's court had become. As de Marillac put it succinctly, there was no worse war than the war the English waged on each other. Even worse, Henry was rather distracted – he had, after all, made a rather novel marriage only months prior.

Catherine Howard is primarily remembered for her alleged affair with courtier Thomas Culpepper and Francis Dereham and the subsequent execution of all three. Popular culture has left us with an image of a pretty, vapid, ineffectual young woman whose sexuality would be her undoing. But sex appeal is only one aspect of Catherine's personality. Chapuys assumed that Catherine, like the Howard family, was a devout Catholic – if she thought about religion at all. Chapuys would emphasise other aspects of her personality in his reports, shifting the focus away from the notion of sexuality to more concrete and tangible aspects. The ambassador's correspondence would again feature domestic affairs, but Chapuys was no longer emotionally involved.

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Henry's pretty young wife made this Christmas of 1540 particularly satisfying for the king and court. For those superstitious courtiers, a ghost of Christmas past flickered in the background – memories of Henry and Anne Boleyn's determined cheer while Katherine languished in exile. Now the scene threatened to play out again. Henry had a new wife at his court; would his recently discarded wife, Anne of Cleves, haunt them as Katherine of Aragon once had?

Anne of Cleves was the deciding factor – she had been less emotionally invested in her marriage – Henry had never been her 'Sir Loyal Heart', and in a gesture of goodwill she came to court as Henry's beloved 'sister'.[24]

One of Chapuys' first impressions of Anne of Cleves, conveyed to Mary of Hungary, is of a dignified and graceful woman. On 3 January 1541, Anne visited Hampton Court. Her thoughtful gifts, sent ahead to Henry and Catherine, denoted her easy grace, an adept method of smoothing a potentially tense situation. Without Anne's intelligent charm and foresight, it might not have gone quite so smoothly. He reported that 'Lady Anne of Cleves sent to the king as a new year's

present, two fine and large horses caparisoned in mauve velvet, with trappings and so forth to match.'[25]

The Howard faction was apprehensive about this Christmas, as the young and wholly inexperienced Catherine required constant supervision and, to an extent, control. Chapuys was only too aware of the fact, making note that the Lord Chancellor, Thomas Audley, and Henry Radclyffe, Earl of Sussex, spent some time with the young queen before they allowed her to meet Anne. Henry's control of Jane Seymour paled in comparison to the cage in which Catherine's family had placed her.

Chapuys was well aware of Anne's reformist inclinations, and admitted that he would do all he could to prevent any romantic reconciliation between Anne and Henry, but on a personal level his reports are generous in their admiration. Chapuys was clearly not wholly blinded by a divergence of faith.

> Having entered the room, Lady Anne approached the Queen with as much reverence and punctilious ceremony as if she herself were the most insignificant damsel about Court, all the time addressing the Queen on her knees, notwithstanding the prayers and entreaties of the latter, who received her most kindly, showing her great favour and courtesy.[26]

Henry could scarcely have hoped for a better response from his former wife. He then entered the room, pleased with the display of affection, and rewarded Anne with his own, paying her due reverence and giving her a New Year's kiss.

> He and his queen sat down to supper in their usual places, whilst their visitor was made to occupy a seat near the bottom of the table, all the time keeping as good a mien and countenance, and looking as unconcerned as if there had been nothing between them.[27]

Chapuys was present for the two nights Anne visited. He watched as Henry retired to his apartments early both evenings, leaving his wife and ex-wife to enjoy the festivities, which Chapuys assured Mary of Hungary they did. Chapuys doesn't make any particular reference to Henry's infirmities. Now obscenely large, in frequent pain and in general ill health, Henry had aged before Chapuys' eyes. While Henry retired to bed,

> the Queen and Lady Anne first danced together, and then separately, each with a partner chosen among the King's gentlemen. Next day the three dined together; there was again conversation, amusement, and mirth, and on the King retiring to his apartments, as on the previous night, the Queen and Lady Anne danced together.[28]

Henry and Catherine were understandably thrilled with Anne's

behaviour this first (and for Catherine last) Christmas at court. Despite her age, and perhaps even naivety, Catherine was quite unlike her feisty cousin, Anne Boleyn. Chapuys noted that she wanted nothing more than perfect harmony in her relationships, and had an especially good relationship with Henry's ex-wife.

> The King sent to his queen by one of his confidential chamberlains a present, consisting of a ring and two small dogs, which present she passed over to Lady Anne – whether in the King's name or in her own I cannot say, though, most likely, as is generally believed, it was in her own, since the King has separately presented Lady Anne with an annual rent of one thousand ducats.[29]

Henry and Catherine had clearly discussed it beforehand in the hope that the meeting would go well. It was not lost on Chapuys that Henry had wanted the gift to come from Catherine personally, without his interference. Catherine was not a passive wife with no real role; Henry – and Catherine – were making sure of that.

Catherine's inauguration festivities took place in late March 1541. Chapuys was present when she and Henry shared the royal barge as they progressed on from Greenwich. Chapuys succinctly reported on the lavish spectacle, and most notably London's enthusiastic reception for Catherine. Did they, like Henry, see Catherine as the means of renewal?

Catherine's next actions, however, left no doubt in Chapuys' mind that Catherine could play the political game with the big boys, as it were. She was no passive observer. Catherine, Chapuys wrote,

> took occasion and courage to beg and entreat the King for the release of Maistre Huyet (Wyatt) a prisoner in the said Tower, which petition the King granted, though on rather hard conditions, the first of them being that the said Wyatt should confess the guilt for which he had been arrested; and, secondly, that he was to resume conjugal relations with his wife, from whom he had been separated for upwards of fifteen years.[30]

Why Wyatt and not John Wallop, who was also under arrest and was a conservative, with ties to Catherine's family? Catherine was making a statement: she was capable of royal impartiality – a concept that Henry struggled with. Wyatt's pardon was heartily granted, and only then did Catherine venture to beg for Wallop. Henry could not refuse his new wife of anything.

> On the same day full pardon and release from prison was granted to Master Waloup [Wallop], who since his return to England [from his French embassy] had been taken to the house of the Lord Privy Seal, and there detained till the hour of his pardon, as aforesaid. His detention, as far as I can learn, was due

to his having said something in favour of Pope Paul.[31]

Catherine had successfully won the hearts of her subjects, but there was one relationship she truly struggled with. Catherine and Mary were destined to have a fractious relationship considering the age difference between Catherine and her new stepdaughter – Mary was five years older.

Chapuys had hoped for a successful meeting between the two throughout the last weeks of 1540, but it was not to be. Mary had snubbed her new stepmother; in Chapuys' words, Catherine was offended because 'the princess did not treat her with the same respect as her two predecessors'.[32]

Chapuys then discovered that, in a fit of pique, Catherine sought to punish Mary and hastily warned Mary that if she didn't make some attempt to get along with her new stepmother, Henry would forcibly remove two of Mary's trusted maids. Mary heeded the warning, and reluctantly took steps to ingratiate herself. Chapuys grew increasingly anxious that the relationship would deteriorate to the level it had with Anne Boleyn. However, it was not Catherine with whom Chapuys was frustrated, but Mary herself.

The ambassador made a note of Mary's conspicuous absence from court during Catherine's first Christmas, but added that she had at least sent Catherine a gift. Chapuys anxiously sought out the messenger who had presented Mary's gift to Catherine and Henry to gauge their reaction, and could report with some satisfaction that it had been well received, and that Henry and Catherine had sent gifts of their own.[33]

> The Princess, hearing from Chapuys that the late attempt to take away two of her maid servants proceeded from the new Queen, has found means to conciliate her, and thinks her maids will remain.[34]

Nevertheless, Henry removed one of Mary's ladies, an iniquitous gesture in Chapuys' eyes, and he reported some weeks later that Mary was in a state of high distress and agitation at the news that this maid suddenly died. Chapuys insisted that she had died from grief.[35] It was a difficult position for both women, a case of wholly divergent ideals and principles and Henry did very little to bridge the gap. Mary seems to have had a cordial relationship with Anne of Cleves, and her father's erratic behaviour was a cause for consternation. Since her mother's death, Mary had endured three stepmothers, and now the fourth could have been her younger sister. For her own part, Catherine felt diffident. Her predecessors had all been significantly older, and she had replaced a relatively popular wife. Perhaps she resented the fact that Mary was so devoted to her father, but rejected her, the woman her father had chosen as his wife. The two women

could find no common ground.

By May, however, Chapuys could report that Henry's domestic life enjoyed fairer weather. Catherine seemed determined to bury the hatchet and move forward with Mary. Chapuys was pleasantly surprised that, on Mary's insistence, they visited her and the young Prince Edward. Chapuys does not record any conversation between the two women, but Henry's behaviour towards Mary, inviting her to reside permanently at court, says quite enough. He also reported that Catherine seemed to approve of this.Chapuys' own domestic affairs were not so satisfactory.

By April of 1541, Charles regressed to his old habit of not paying his ambassador, and Chapuys and was severely out of pocket (or at least his ambassadorial pocket). Every letter denoted his increasing chagrin at not being able to afford special messengers for despatches.

> I might, perhaps, have dispatched a private messenger of my own, but, to tell Your Majesty the truth ... I have no money left for such a service, even if the news had been more important than it is. I therefore beg Your Majesty to order that I be paid my arrears, besides 126 florins which stand as a balance in my favour by last year's account …[36]

And weeks later:

> The couriers are daily importuning me with their complaints, and asking me to pay them their due, which is exceedingly inconvenient for me to do at this present moment, my funds being now exceedingly low ... That is why I beg Your Majesty to give orders that my arrears of seven months' pay, and something more in advance, be remitted to me as soon as possible.[37]

At least Chapuys was now thinking ahead.

As we have seen, paid informants were an integral element of Chapuys' embassy, and the financial encumbrance threatened his ability to immerse himself further in court intrigue and gossip. He still managed however, to have eyes and ears in both royal households. Chapuys relayed a peculiar anecdote, in his words from a reliable source in Catherine's household:

> I hear from a good source that this queen being some days ago rather sad and thoughtful, and the King wishing to know the cause, she declared to him that it was all owing to some rumour or other afloat that he [the King] was about to take back Anne de Cleves as his wife. To which the King replied that she was wrong to believe such things … even if he had to marry again, he would never retake Madame de Clèves, which is, in my opinion, most likely.[38]

Chapuys could not fault Henry's assurance, 'considering the king's natural condition, which is never to feel affection for a person he has

once loved and then abandoned'.[39]

Nothing came of Catherine's fears; Henry was, for now, blissfully content.

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Despite Chapuys' best efforts, negotiations between Henry and Charles had stalled, and the ambassador detected a decided lean towards Anglo–French relations. In what Chapuys must have considered déjà vu, his audiences with the king became decidedly strained. Henry continuously lambasted the ambassador, insisting that without his support Charles's hold on the Low Countries would be threatened. Henry was irate, complaining that Charles had no interest in settling merchant disagreements between the two nations.[40] That wasn't quite the case. They were very eager to do so, with the hope of securing an alliance against the French; the commercial pressure was a means to an end.

Chapuys' success as an ambassador was, of course, largely dependent on trade and commerce, and, considering his successful negotiations throughout his first embassy, he was eager to prove that he was still effective. However, Henry had proved to be much less malleable by 1540 and certainly more suspicious of Chapuys' motives. The unspoken accusation of bias and partisanship lingered, and Chapuys felt compelled to reshape his image if he was to succeed in a double bluff that he was now planning. He asked Mary of Hungary for a reference, vouching for his impartiality. Mary's letter surpassed Chapuys' expectations, and effectively rehabilitated his image. His response to her letter was unsurprisingly effusive: 'I could never sufficiently thank you for the very courteous, wise, and prudent language of those letters, couched as they are, to excuse and exonerate me.'[41]

What the English didn't know was that at the same time, Chapuys had personally advised Mary regarding to trade sanctions, effectively working against English interests. On his instructions Mary had agreed to increase commercial pressure on England to force it into an alliance with Charles. The letter was merely part of a ruse in which Chapuys claimed no knowledge of Mary's plans to impose the sanctions, to give the impression that he represented Henry's interests to Mary. It was a precarious dual role.

By March of 1541, a cold war had broken out. Chapuys reported to the Privy Council that Mary forbade any imports into the Low Countries or Spain. Furious, the English confiscated a Dutch ship and threatened the Spanish merchants. Chapuys' workload increased significantly as European merchants flocked to him in the hope of reclaiming their confiscated merchandise and having proper representation. Henry's next move suggested he was anxious to deal

with Mary himself, bypassing Chapuys. He sent two men to visit her directly, causing Chapuys to hurriedly write to Mary, begging her to reinforce his carefully constructed image.

> I beg Your Majesty to make the English ambassadors understand that besides my not being well acquainted with the mercantile affairs of the Low Countries [a blatant lie] … I showed myself to be a little partial to this King.[42]

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May 1541 was marred by a violent execution, unexpected and distressing to many.

Margaret Pole had been imprisoned in the Tower since 1538, part of Henry's vendetta against her sons Reginald and Geoffrey. Margaret, now sixty-seven, had been caught in the crossfire. Everyone was taken by surprise. But Henry, dealing with rebellions in the North once more, felt the need to send a clear and bloody message to his rivals for the throne.A bewildered and emotional letter from Chapuys to Charles described the execution.

> At first, when the sentence of death was made known to her, she found the thing very strange, not knowing of what crime she was accused, nor how she had been sentenced; but at last, perceiving that there was no remedy, and that die she must … walked towards the midst of the space in front of the Tower, where there was no scaffold erected nor anything except a small block. Arrived there, after commending her soul to her Creator, she asked those present to pray for the King, the Queen, the Prince and the Princess, to all of whom she wished to be particularly commended, and more especially to the latter, whose god-mother she had been. She sent her blessing to her, and begged also for hers.[43]

Margaret might have been dignified, but her execution was not. A distraught Chapuys reported that the usual executioner was busy in the North, distributing justice to the current rebels, and the task in London had fallen to a young man who had no idea what he was doing. It was by all accounts a botched execution, a tragic end for a woman who represented one of the last threads of the glorious days of York and Lancaster – a woman who had been a faithful friend to Katherine of Aragon and mentor to Mary. The court was in a state of shock, but Henry's mind was already on a new venture.

Henry had postponed his usual progress to the North following the Pilgrimage of Grace back in 1536, and Chapuys was surprised to discover that he had been making plans to resume it in the coming summer.[44] Henry and Catherine set out with a lavish retinue, braving the unseasonably wet weather as they headed north. Several ambassadors, including de Marillac, had accompanied the court, but

Chapuys remained in London, his ill health, gout in particular, impeding his mobility. The progress was not something any ambassador could afford to miss, but Chapuys had a contingency plan. Unbeknown to de Marillac, his trusted secretary, Jehan Hons, who accompanied him, was already working for Chapuys.[45]

De Marillac was without Chapuys' skill for subterfuge and talent for creating double agents. He may have discovered sensitive information in Chapuys' previous residence, but Chapuys ensured he had access to fresh and continuous information by turning de Marillac's personal secretary into his own informant.[46] Hons would provide him with sensitive information throughout 1541 and 1542, surpassing whatever de Marillac had gleaned. Chapuys reported:

> The confidential person above alluded to is to send me in a couple of days, or when I like, the alphabet of four different ciphers which king Francis or his ministers use in writing to their ambassadors in various countries, and I am only waiting for my man to be completely restored to health to obtain, through his agency, some of the most important original letters in the possession of this French ambassador.[47]

Chapuys was able to send Charles copied letters from Francis to de Marillac, and was kept abreast of Henry's progress throughout July.[48] Hons not only kept him up to date in London, but provided the French ciphers to Charles (at great cost, Chapuys was quick to point out). Chapuys was aware of his inability to bite his tongue when necessary; the more information was sent to him, the more nervous he became when de Marillac visited.

> Thinking that I would not be able to drag out of him any information with regard to king Francis' answer, and fearing also lest in conversing about political affairs in general some expression might escape me as to make him suspect, what is really the fact, that I have read king Francis' letters to him, I refrained from touching on politics, and there was only mirth and good cheer in the evening, besides some light conversation on his own journey to York, with which he seems by no means satisfied.[49]

As with all his sources, Chapuys was careful to sift through the secret letters from Hons before he sent them to Charles, and even made a note on one, suggesting it was pure invention.[50] Yet what began as a simple transaction of information for payment became a full defection to the Imperial service. Chapuys soon began to praise Hons' skills:

> Besides being a good Latin and Greek scholar, and well versed in legal matters, the person I beg to recommend is an honest and worthy gentleman, has talent and wit, and is well

> disposed to serve Your Imperial Majesty in France and elsewhere. Should the embassy be withdrawn, wherever the man goes he will perhaps be as useful as he has been hitherto.[51]

When Hons finally left the French service at the end of August 1542, he immediately travelled to Mary of Hungary's court, an enthusiastic letter of recommendation from Chapuys in his pocket.

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The weeks following Henry and Catherine's return from their progress in 1541 were concerned primarily with the never-ending triangle of diplomacy between Henry, Francis and Charles. It was a complex series of negotiations. De Marillac was determined to draw Henry away from Charles with the promise of a marital alliance between Lady Mary and the Duke of Orleans, and Chapuys did all he could to thwart the negotiations. The idea of Mary being married to France was a personal affront as much as a political one. Hons proved invaluable but demanding when it came to payment, only giving partial reports unless he was paid the full amount. The diplomatic wars occupied Chapuys' waking moments, and so he seems to have been blindsided by the news in November that all was not well between Henry and his young wife. Months before, Chapuys had reported a peculiar incident in which Catherine was anxious of losing Henry's love:

> Last Lent I wrote to Your Majesty that this king, feigning indisposition, was ten or twelve days without seeing his queen or allowing her to come into his room; that during all that time there had been much consultation and talk of a divorce; but that, owing to some presumption that she [the Queen] was in the family way, or because the means and ways to bring about a divorce were not yet sufficiently prepared.[52]

The matter had seemed resolved, but Chapuys believed some matrimonial drama had once again erupted, as he reported that Henry had suddenly left Catherine at Hampton Court and departed with only a handful of attendants.[53]

What Chapuys had missed was the beginning of an investigation into Catherine's conduct, the genesis of which was a complaint by Mary Lascelles, a serving woman who had known Catherine prior to her marriage to Henry. Lascelles had confided to her brother John some shocking information about Catherine's conduct. He then relayed this information to Thomas Cranmer: Catherine was not as naive as Henry had assumed.[54]

In these early days, however, Chapuys could only report that Cranmer led the investigation. He only presumed so far that Cranmer and members of the Privy Council frequented Catherine's rooms to interrogate and admonish her for some offence. Finally Chapuys

discovered that one of Catherine's ushers, a gentleman named Francis Dereham, had been sent to the Tower.

At first Chapuys believed Henry was repeating his most common excuse for getting out of a marriage: playing the pre-contract card.

> From what I have been able to learn, after most diligent inquiry, it seems that the King pretends that the above mentioned Durem [Dereham] had actually been betrothed to the Queen before her marriage to him, and, therefore, that his own is invalid and null.[55]

Days later he had a better idea of the story, namely that Catherine had confessed to having had carnal relations with Francis Dereham prior to her marriage to Henry, but then it became even more convoluted.

> Besides that lately, upon investigation, it had been discovered that Master Colpeper [Culpepper], of the King's bedchamber, who slept at the bottom of his bed, had received from her certain love-tokens, and met her twice privately within the last two months, each meeting lasting five to six hours.[56]

It was scandalous enough without the addition of a facilitator – Jane Rochford, George Boleyn's widow, had not been an idle lady-in-waiting. Jane, Chapuys reported, had helped the lovers meet, ensuring that they were undisturbed and, more importantly, undiscovered. The whole situation perplexed the ambassador, who could only ask Henry's councillors how Henry intended to proceed – would there be another divorce?

The Duke of Norfolk, Catherine's uncle, was by all accounts furious that another niece was disgraced. Chapuys reported that

> Upon my asking the Lord Privy Seal how the King, his master, intended to treat the case, he answered that the King would bear the blow more patiently and compassionately than most people thought, nay, a good deal more tenderly than the Queen's own relatives, if it be true, as reported, that the duke of Norfolk has declared – God knows why – that he wishes the Queen to be burnt alive.[57]

Chapuys hoped that she would instead be sent to a nunnery; perhaps an unfaithful wife was the sort of karma he believed Henry deserved.Culpepper and Dereham were to be tried for high treason, and a general invitation was sent out to all the foreign embassies, inviting them to be present for the trial; they all obliged.

Chapuys recorded both men's arguments. Dereham's seemed logical; he confessed to having had sex with Catherine long before her marriage to Henry, so it was hardly an offence. Culpepper vehemently denied any carnal knowledge, angrily stating that Catherine had approached him via Jane Rochford and they had met, but crucially he

denied going any further than words. Chapuys reported that 'she herself told him, as she had on the first instance sent him word through Mme Rochefort, that she pined for him, and was actually dying of love for his person'.[58]

The defence made no difference. No one who crossed Henry would walk away alive. This included Jane Rochford.

Chapuys reported that both men were sentenced to be executed as traitors, but Jane was granted a momentary reprieve. She had apparently gone mad while under arrest, and English law prohibited execution if the accused had been declared insane. He also caustically added that Henry sent his own physicians to her on a daily basis, to help her recover – after all, he was anxious to have her executed.[59]

Catherine languished not at the Tower, but Syon House in London, and Chapuys genuinely believed that she would escape death. Yet he marvelled at Henry's unfeigned sorrow; the only time he had witnessed such an emotion from Henry towards a wife was at Jane's passing.

> This king has wonderfully felt the case of the Queen, his wife, and that he has certainly shown greater sorrow and regret at her loss than at the faults, loss, or divorce of his preceding wives. In fact, I should say that this king's case resembles very much that of the woman who cried more bitterly at the loss of her tenth husband than she had cried on the death of the other nine put together, though all of them had been equally worthy people and good husbands to her: the reason being that she had never buried one of them without being sure of the next, but that after the tenth husband she had no other one in view, hence her sorrow and her lamentations.[60]

As Chapuys succinctly remarked, this time Henry had no wife-in-waiting.

Dereham and Culpepper were executed in December of 1541. Dereham, however, was not as fortunate as Culpepper, who was only beheaded – Dereham endured the traitor's death of being hanged, drawn and quartered.[61]

Chapuys also reported that various members of Norfolk's family, including his mother, Elizabeth, the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk, had been arrested. Catherine had been raised in her household, and Henry felt she must have been complicit in Catherine's first affair. 'Not to leave the Tower empty of lodgers, no sooner had the above-mentioned left for the place of execution than the old duchess of Norfolk, second wife of the father of the present Duke, was conveyed to it.'[62]

Finally Catherine was put on trial. Chapuys seemed to feel empathy for the young woman, writing that the chancellor's accusations of Catherine's misdeeds were exaggerated and aggravated

without measure.[63] Of Catherine's house arrest, however, we have a rather pithy account, despite the gravity of the situation.

> She [Catherine] is still in Sion [*sic*] House, making good cheer, fatter and handsomer than ever she was, taking great care of her person, well dressed, and much adorned [with jewels]; more imperious and commanding, and more difficult to please than she ever was when living with the King, her husband.[64]

It sounds rather snide, and yet there is a distinct undercurrent, just perceptible beneath the catty comments.

> Perhaps, unless the King wishes to marry again, for which at present he shows no inclination, he may evince some commiseration towards her; perhaps, also, he may find it easy and allowable for himself to have several wives, and afterwards get rid of them by cause of adultery or in some other way, and in that case his late queen's life might be spared.[65]

Henry could not have fallen further in Chapuys' eyes, who reported with barely concealed derision that while Catherine awaited her fate, Henry was already wining and dining ladies of the court.

> The lady for whom he showed the greater predilection on the occasion was no other than the sister of Monsieur Coban [Cobham], the same lady whom Master Huyet (Wyatt) did some time ago repudiate on a charge of adultery. She is a pretty young creature, and has sense enough to do as the others have done should she consider it worth her while.[66]

Christmas came and went, with very little festivity, but much female diversion on Henry's part.

On 10 January 1542, Catherine was conveyed to the Tower; it became clear that she would not escape execution. Chapuys grows sombre again, reporting that Catherine had made a peculiar request – that the executioner's block be sent to her room.

> In the same evening she asked to see the block, pretending that she wanted to know how she was to place her head on it. This was granted, and the block being brought in, she herself tried and placed her head on it by way of experiment.[67]

It was an unsettling gesture, but it was also poignant. Even in death, Catherine had not wanted to disappoint. Chapuys' report of Catherine's execution is more or less perfunctory; he describes it briefly, before moving on to Catherine's partner in death, Jane Rochford. Henry would not let Jane to slip through the legal net. He quickly passed a law in order to have her executed regardless of her mental state.

Chapuys doubted that she had ever been genuinely mad, noting that her sanity appeared to return when she was informed of her impending execution.[68]

Catherine, it seemed, was to be forgotten immediately, much like Anne had been six years prior. Chapuys was not going to ponder this latest folly as he had in 1536:

> Since the execution the King has been in better spirits and more joyful than before, and during the three last days of Lent there has been much feasting and banqueting. On Sunday the privy councillors and lords of his court were invited; on Monday the Legal men, and on Tuesday the ladies, all of whom passed the night in the Palace. The King himself did nothing else on the morning of that day than go from one chamber to another to inspect the lodgings prepared for the ladies, all of whom, generally speaking, he received with much gaiety.[69]

Chapuys could only hope that no more women would be reckless enough to enter into marriage with Henry, but if such women existed, there were serious legal clauses now in place. He reported that

> a law has just passed in Parliament enjoining that should the King or his successors wish to marry a subject of theirs, the lady chosen will be bound to declare, under pain of death, if any charge of misconduct can be brought against her. All those who know for certain, suspect, or presume anything of the kind are also bound to reveal the same within twenty days, under pain of confiscation of property and imprisonment for life; the same sentence to be passed on those of any condition or rank who, within the period above specified, did not reveal to the King himself, or to a member of his Privy Council.[70]

Henry was now a little wiser.

Glory

> *The King is now actively arming a number of war ships, for he dislikes exceedingly, as he says, to be taken unawares and injured by his enemy, whoever he may be.*
>
> Chapuys to Mary of Hungary, 1542

For the second time, Henry was a man without a queen. For the first time, however, he was entirely happy with the fact. As with the divorces and executions of his previous wives, the court moved on. Charles's only response was to ask Chapuys whether he thought Henry might marry again: 'You will do Us service by ascertaining as far as possible whether king Henry is, or is not, inclined to marry again, and in what direction his fantastic tendencies drive him nowadays.'[1]

Marital issues notwithstanding, the majority of court drama centred on the circus that was foreign diplomacy. Without a marital connection binding Henry to one faction or the other, or indeed a foreign power, Henry, Francis and Charles engaged in earnest subterfuge. To prevent a French–Imperial alliance, Chapuys reported that Henry sided with Charles. Francis on the other hand attempted to open a breach in Anglo–Imperial relations; Charles hedged his bets.[2]

The heady mix of drama, intrigue and negotiation was the perfect political milieu for a young ambassador to learn the art of diplomacy. Chapuys was not a young man, and was looking to retire. Not that de Marillac was faring much better. Chapuys reported that he was in low spirits as he had not been able to conclude a marriage treaty between Mary and the Duke of Orleans.

Chapuys felt he was no longer politically relevant at Henry's court. In letters to Mary of Hungary and de Granvelle, Chapuys made a push for recall, citing stalled negotiations between Henry and Charles, and lack of promised funds. Personal pride aside, Chapuys knew he was not the ambassador Charles needed in England, and suggested that a negotiator with greater authority be sent.[3]

Charles had merely assured his ambassador that he was perfect for the job, ignoring his promise of proper payment, which was what had induced Chapuys to resume his post in the first place.[4]

Instead, Chapuys was told in no uncertain terms that he would remain at his post, and he would devote his time to undermining an Anglo–French alliance. Charles did, however, take note of one of his ambassador's suggestions; he agreed to send Brussels native Philip de Montmorency to England to assist the beleaguered ambassador. Charles had more cause than usual to pursue an English alliance. Relations between Charles and Francis had been close to breaking point for months; French envoys had disappeared en route to Suleiman's court at Constantinople. The blame was placed squarely on

Imperial forces. The long-standing conflict regarding the Duchy of Milan was also dredged up, and Francis declared war on the Emperor.[5] It was business as usual.

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Chapuys had few audiences with Henry in the early months of 1542, while Henry nursed a broken heart, or at least a wounded ego. Catherine's arrest had dulled his appetite. But eventually, to Chapuys' relief, Henry began to emerge from his despondency. By April the ambassador resumed his formal audiences, keenly watching for any reconciliation with Anne of Cleves. To his relief he saw no indication:

> Indeed, were it not that for the sake of mirth and pleasure he occasionally frequents the company of ladies as a man who has, as it were, been nurtured among them, I should say that he is not likely to think of a new marriage. Ever since he heard of his late Queen's misconduct he has become sad and mournful, and I have scarcely spoken to him once without finding him lowspirited and dejected, sighing continually.[6]

Charles and Francis both attempted to procure Henry's support against each other. Chapuys opened negotiations on the Emperor's behalf, but Henry complained the ambassador seemed to be without any specific instructions or powers. Charles had failed his ambassador in the sense that he was negotiating blind, and Henry knew it.

It is a noticeable departure from the Chapuys we have seen in previous despatches. Usually keen to portray himself as having the upper hand intellectually as well as diplomatically, he is now self-effacing, almost weary of ambassadorial jargon. He tried to appeal to Henry on a personal level, man-to-man as it were.

> This being the fit time and opportunity to speak frankly and without dissimulation – the cause for mutual mistrust on account of the close intelligence with France having already disappeared – I begged and entreated him to speak to me confidentially, as if I were his subject and servant, solemnly promising to him that whatever he should declare or communicate to me, I would make a point not to reveal to any living person without express permission from him, and that if his declaration was concerning political affairs, I undertook to write home as if the idea originally sprang from myself, without mentioning him in the least.[7]

In other words, *you* tell me what you want, and *I* will present it to Charles as if it were my idea. If Henry seemed unmoved by this new approach, Chapuys' next words stirred something within him.

> Should he find at any time that I had betrayed his confidence, I should be willing to renounce the privileges of ambassador, and to be well punished for my want of faith. This

last sentence produced visible effect on the King; I saw his face expand and his eyes glitter.[8]

It had taken almost thirteen years, but to Henry it seemed that Chapuys had finally learned a little humility. However, the humility served an agenda. The ambassador's words, seemingly out of character, concealed a new strategy devised by Chapuys and Henry's own councillors. Rather than provoke Henry, which had been Chapuys' default tactic, he was advised to flatter the aging and irascible king. Chapuys outdid himself.[9] The ambassador had cultivated good political relations with Henry's Lord Privy Seal, William Fitzwilliam, and Thomas Wriothesley (a phonetically challenging name Chapuys and his secretaries continued to misspell). Like Cromwell before them, both men wielded enviable power and influence. Like Cromwell, too, they seemed to favour an Imperial alliance and recognised that Chapuys was useful in this regard.

Henry's physical reactions during the audience were to Chapuys as noteworthy as his words. He made a point of reporting Henry's responses to begging him to reveal his true thoughts on an alliance: Henry remained thoughtful, 'sighing frequently' and 'smiling gently'.[10]

Chapuys' supplication was undermined by one simple fact: he had no official powers to promise anything in terms of an alliance. Henry also suspected that Mary of Hungary was pressuring Chapuys to stall negotiations. In fact, it was perhaps the first time the ambassador was being pulled in entirely different directions by those he reported to. Charles pressed for a speedy alliance, while Mary insisted on delaying until they were satisfied with the wording of the treaties.[11]

The ambassador dined with the Privy Councillors days after the audience. He faced an awkward and potentially humiliating scene – the council requested any papers that directly showed that Charles had acknowledged Chapuys as his proxy in negotiations, which he did not yet have. Chapuys had to think on his feet. He reported,

> I found to my great dismay that my secretary had made a mistake, and that instead of the document required for the occasion, had taken another one nearly resembling it. No objection however was made, the privy councillors contenting themselves with the explanation I gave them of the substance of the document. Nor did the King take notice of it or make any remark, though both the Lord Privy Seal and secretary Wristly [Wriothesley] had deemed it necessary to tell him. After this I was asked to declare formally what my charge was and to make overtures accordingly, if so authorized by my instructions.[12]

Chapuys was treading water, while trying to give the impression they were in fact moving forward. The instructions still eluded him, but Chapuys dexterously moved beyond the trivial issue of lack of

orders. When Charles did send the instructions, he assured the men that he would 'speak out openly and frankly, and that if in the meantime the King wished to treat shortly and without delay'.[13]

In the meantime, Chapuys suggested that Henry make the first move – he wasn't aware that he already had. Henry was happy to wage war on Francis, if Charles financed it. Mary of Hungary was taken aback by Henry's request that he needed provisions for the English Army – 11,516 horses in all, for chariots and cavalry. Mary complained that the request was excessive, not to mention hard to procure.[14]

Charles needed his own equine contingent. With the additional news that Francis was increasing his army and ammunition on the Luxembourg frontier, it was evident to Chapuys that the alliance had to be secured as quickly as possible, and he insisted on being personally involved on both sides of the negotiating table.

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Finally the letters came. Here at last was his clear brief, and its contents almost made up for the delay.

> We may trust, on the loyalty, fidelity, wisdom, good sense, and discretion of Our dear and faithful councillor and Master of Requests in ordinary, Messire Eustace Chappuys, Our ambassador near the person of the said king. We have deputed and appointed him Our procurator and 'mandataire', to treat of, discuss, and colude with the said king and his ministers a treaty of closer friendship, intelligence, and confederation.[15]

The French ambassador de Marillac was increasingly agitated by the deference shown to Chapuys at court. He wrote that the Imperial ambassador was being favoured over himself, leading him to conclude that Henry was leaning towards an Imperial alliance.[16] What de Marillac did not know was that Chapuys had petitioned Henry for a ship to take him to Flanders, and a sedan chair, as he had trouble walking, to get to the ship.[17] De Marillac would only discover the plan when Chapuys was aboard the ship destined for Mary of Hungary in Flanders.

However bad weather changed the plan, and we learn from de Marillac that the ambassador was taken by litter to Dover, where two Imperial ships escorted him instead to Gravelines, or St Omer as it was known, to continue negotiations. We have no letters detailing his involvement, but he would not stay long, and was back in London by the end of June.

Chapuys had not neglected his domestic duty; Lady Mary, as ever, occupied his thoughts. Her welfare was as ever on his mind. Still unmarried, in limbo, she suffered from various illnesses, and the stress took a continual toll on Chapuys. He wrote to de Granvelle, Mary and

Charles, his anxiety evident: 'The Princess suffers still from palpitations of the heart, which trouble her considerably.'[18]

He carefully monitored the situation, often writing to her to ask for updates. Yet again, his letters exceed his ambassadorial duty; he was deeply concerned by her frequent illnesses and his personal letters are clearly designed to divert her. 'To say the truth, I did my very best to comfort and cheer her in the midst of her ailments.'[19]

He was restless, anxiously writing to her as she recovered, and she in turn wrote warmly, thanking him for his fatherly concern. 'The Princess has not improved in health of late; on the contrary, she has occasionally been in danger of her life. I pray and beseech God to grant her more consolation and pleasure than she has hitherto enjoyed.'[20]

She in turn wrote warmly, thanking him for his concern. No one besides her mother had ever had the same comforting effect on the young woman. Chapuys proudly reported that Mary constantly wrote to him, asking after Charles – and himself, of course.

Perhaps the correspondence between the two served as a distraction for the ambassador from his increasingly difficult position. Summer had arrived and he had not managed to get Henry out on the battlefield headway.

> The proposed alliance is the only efficacious remedy in the dangerous and irksome position of the Emperor's affairs, would have done anything to unite his cause to that of His Imperial Majesty … because he seems quite ready and willing just now to ward off the inconveniences, dangers, and, I should say, imminent ruin of Christendom, and to risk his throne and his life in that holy and Christian enterprise.[21]

It certainly had the desired effect. On 1 June 1542, Henry offered 3,000 foot soldiers and cavalry for a French invasion.[22] Yet, far from being pleased, Charles was highly suspicious – he had never truly anticipated, after so many years of cajoling and coaxing, that Henry would suddenly and so completely jump on the bandwagon. Despite Charles's misgivings, his ambassador was determined to move forward, having been informed by Mary of Hungary that the French were amassing on the Luxembourg border.[23] He confided in de Granvelle, couched merely as his own humble opinion, that it was absolutely vital for Charles to accept Henry's offer:

> If the inconstancy, perfidy, and malice of the French, who, regardless of what Your Lordship has done for them at other times, would like to see you now at the bottom of the sea, is to be successfully counteracted the friendship of the English must be secured at any cost.[24]

The ambassador continued to gather intelligence regarding Henry's

true intentions, and once more looked to a neighbour, Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester. Gardiner was a known religious conservative at court, and had recently moved in to a house nearby after a sudden illness. Both men were determined to make the most of it, and they dined often. Although not a true replacement for Cromwell, the ambassador was undoubtedly pleased to find a man eager to discuss the Ottoman Empire and affairs in Rome – in short, wider European issues.

> I had the opportunity of talking to him of public affairs in general, and particularly of Christendom and the Turk, of the strange, dangerous, and detestable practices of the French, and other political matters, in such a way and manner as to advance and promote the present negotiation for closer friendship and intelligence between Your Imperial Majesty and this king.[25]

Gardiner proved to be a most effective source, but at Christmas of 1542 Chapuys' most precious informant came into play.

Lady Mary made a triumphant entrance to court in late December for the upcoming Christmas festivities. The ambassador was pleased to report that Mary and her father enjoyed a warm and intimate Christmas, the first without a wife to complicate matters. Neither Mary nor her devoted ambassador believed Henry would take another wife within a year. Deeply ensconced with her father, she became Chapuys' eyes and ears, and Mary was a most willing accomplice.

> The Princess, whom I had earnestly requested to let me know what she had heard of the French ambassador's doings at Court and in the Privy Council, has sent me word that, as far as she herself can understand, the Frenchman's practices could scarcely do any harm to Your Imperial Majesty's affairs.
>
> This very morning she has sent me another message to the effect that yesterday she overheard [entreouyt] her father, the King, say to one of his privy councillors: 'You may go and tell the French ambassador [de Marillac] that I do not intend doing any harm to the King, his master, but that if he purposes causing me any annoyance in Scotland, he will find me quite ready to meet him face to face.'[26]

Chapuys was overjoyed by Mary's enchanting performance, as she now emerged as the premier woman of the court. Festivities provided a brief respite from war preparations, but within five days de Granvelle and Chapuys were back to the treaty.

De Granvelle was exceedingly pleased with what his friend had accomplished: 'God be praised for the good work you have been able to accomplish at last, and of which I am certain the Emperor will be glad to hear, at the same time that he cannot fail to acknowledge the great service you have rendered him on this occasion.'[27]

De Granvelle also addressed Chapuys' health concerns, persuading the ambassador that it was not yet time to throw in the towel, so to speak; he was too valuable.

> Sorry to hear that you are troubled with gout. You must fight against it as well as you can during this summer, and since the Emperor's affairs in that country have been placed by your efforts in so right a path that complete success may confidently be expected to your honor and credit, as well as profit – for you cannot fail to be amply rewarded by His Imperial Majesty – do, I pray, persevere in your work, and wait patiently for the remuneration of your long and valuable services. As to your quitting England before next winter, I see no chance whatever; your presence in that court is now more necessary than ever for His Imperial Majesty's service. I myself, as a friend of yours, could not under the circumstances propose or recommend your leaving that embassy.[28]

Mary of Hungary's response to Chapuys also demonstrates her trust in his judgement.

> Use your well-known ability and discretion to ascertain what the King's real intentions are respecting the affair in question, without, however, pressing him harder than you deem it convenient or necessary, respecting the assistance in money, in case he should be unwilling to carry on war against France. This you must avoid as much as possible, for fear of disgusting the King, and making him suspect that We want to throw on him all the expense of the war. On Our part, should the King send his ambassadors to Us, We will take care to speak to them in the terms of Mons. de Granvelle's note to you.[29]

De Granvelle also expressed a desire to visit England so that he might convince Henry of Imperial affections in person. Unfortunately for de Granvelle, he had always been prevented one way or another from making the journey.

> Even now, that I am so close to that country, I do not see how I could possibly take the leap without being in fault here in Flanders, and neglecting the mutual affairs of His Imperial Majesty and of that king, which happen to be just now in very fair way, so much so that the Emperor, our master, will on his arrival find everything in very good train.[30]

Nevertheless, de Granvelle was confident that Chapuys would do his utmost to ensure Henry remained firmly tied to Charles, and was kept at odds with Francis. De Granvelle could at least assure his old friend that Francis was universally hated: 'He is as much abominated as Judas was. For God's sake, let no time be lost at this present season and juncture, when all heavenly and terrestrial influences are

decidedly against the common enemy.'[31]

Much to the ambassador's annoyance, the French were not universally hated at the English court. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey and the eldest son of the Duke of Norfolk, was proving to be nothing like his conservative father. Not only was Surrey, in Chapuys' eyes, a Frenchman at heart, he was suspected of harbouring heretical notions and having an interest in Lutheranism. Chapuys wasn't sure which was worse.[32]

A draft of the treaty had been carefully conveyed to Charles and Mary via the ambassador's servant Symon. The draft itself proved to be a resounding success; Chapuys had proved that he was the man for the job. Charles wrote in glowing terms to his ambassador, commending Chapuys' dexterity and diligence and, most importantly, acknowledging his dedication. This time Charles acted immediately, signing the document and sending confirmation that Chapuys had his full confidence and acquiescence to ensure the treaty was signed at the other end.[33] After decades of multiple dramas and failed attempts, one of Chapuys' first aims had at last been achieved – but would it last?

The trick, as Chapuys knew, was to play to Henry's romanticised notion of himself. The glorious reigns of the English monarchs and their mighty battles had shaped England's pride and sense of self-worth. Yet Henry had hitherto no such campaign, no glorious event to his name. However, Chapuys smoothly fed this desire, asking for the king's input and keeping his mind focused. Mary of Hungary made clear her approval of Chapuys' talent for managing Henry.

> You did wisely not to press him too hard. Until you perceive his inclination and good will to undertake something of the sort against the common enemy, you must avoid pressing him on the subject, for fear that too much pressure on Our part should render him suspicious and cold.[34]

In several meetings, Henry and the ambassador discussed military tactics or, more specifically, Henry spoke and Chapuys listened. He was able to learn more about Henry's methods and way of thinking – a valuable insight. Pouring over maps in his chambers, Henry advised that Charles (whose military prowess had maintained his vast empire) should attack Champagne in France, which would pave the way for a direct attack on Paris, Francis's capital. Henry's troops would move in on Boulogne, Montreuil, Abbeville and on to Rouen.

Relations were further strengthened with the departure of Thomas Seymour to Mary's court. Thomas had emerged as one of the premier courtiers and diplomats. Chapuys makes only the briefest of mentions of him, but the two men had evidently forged a connection; Chapuys had recommended Thomas's appointment as ambassador to Mary's

court, and he left England with a personal letter from Chapuys.[35]

The treaty was ratified in May, signalling the beginning of war with France – if Henry and Charles could manage not to renege on their new alliance. In a slightly sharp letter to the ambassador, Mary of Hungary informed him that either the English ambassadors in the Low Countries were making grand promises on his behalf, and without his consent, or Chapuys had got carried away with Henry. She asked the ambassador to explain whether he had assured Henry that the war on France would be in line with English needs, or that the invasion would be instigated from wherever Henry deemed it convenient for him.[36] Mary's words – and warning – were chosen carefully; no doubt the English had got it wrong, or had wilfully misconstrued the ambassador's words.

The letter was quickly answered. Chapuys was adamant that he had not made any official suggestions, but he added that he may have made personal ones – off the record. However, the ambassador was certain that his words had not caused trouble; Henry was deliberately stalling.

The idea of war seemed to reinvigorate Henry; he felt younger as military preparations proceeded, and a younger-feeling Henry typically meant one thing: marriage. Katharine Parr more or less appears out of nowhere in the despatches; Henry had decided to keep the wooing of his sixth wife under wraps. She was not a bright young girl or a sexy vixen – Katharine Parr was a woman of practicality.

Chapuys seemed unfazed by this development; his only concern was how this sixth marriage would affect Mary. For the sake of her and the rest of England, Chapuys hoped that this would be the last marriage. The news of Henry's marriage was conveyed not to Charles, but to his son Phillip in Spain, whom Chapuys addressed as 'Most high and most powerful lord'.

Phillip would later marry the Lady Mary, but for now he was the next generation of correspondent, and crucially Chapuys had to communicate with him in Spanish.

Chapuys' earnest apologies for his clumsy Spanish do his linguistic skill a disservice; his Spanish is coherent, even polished. Thus, Chapuys was engaging in a courtly display of modesty; he wanted to draw attention to his style. Writing to Phillip, Chapuys declared, 'May God be pleased that this marriage turn out well, and that the King's favour and affection for the princess, his daughter, continue to increase. The latter has just sent me a message desiring me to salute Your Highness in her name.'[37]

This is our first vague introduction to Katharine Parr, the sixth and final wife, influential stepmother and evangelical.

A change of embassy had occurred in 1543 in yet another example

of the younger generations beginning to take over the posts of their fathers. Thomas Perrenot de Granvelle, grandson of Chapuys' old friend, had been appointed ambassador to Henry's court during June, and the young man was certainly a breath of fresh air. Was the ambassador beginning to feel his age upon meeting this third generation? While these young men emerged, Chapuys remained in the same position he had held for nearly fourteen years. Whether on the grounds of kinship or affection, the two men immediately developed a rapport. The ambassador took a keen interest in how the young man would perform at court; he was not disappointed.

> This duty Mr. de Chantonnay [Thomas Perrenot] acquitted himself so wisely and with such discretion that nothing could be better. But as Mr. de Chantonnay will shortly give Your Imperial Majesty a fuller account than I myself can, both of his own address in explanation of his commission and the King's answer to it, I shall refrain from writing too long a letter.[38]

Chapuys was constantly ill by this time. Gout had crippled his hands, making it almost impossible to write. Thomas Perrenot took over, being advised by the older ambassador. No doubt Chapuys hoped that the new generation would take up the baton, so to speak, and he would be allowed to retire, but Henry still had need of him.

Perrenot had arrived with a hefty pay packet for the Imperial ambassador; Charles had finally addressed Chapuys' financial concerns. He was paid the significant amount owed on 29 September 1543. Yet the payment is curious – why had Charles, who had hitherto ignored the ambassador, suddenly complied? The answer perhaps lies in Charles's timing.

Thomas Perrenot's mission was also to ask Henry for a month's loan to his Imperial army in the Low Countries. Charles had been fighting William, Duke of Cleves, for control of the Duchy of Guelders, to which both had laid claim, and needed to continue financing his campaign. It was a weighty task for the new diplomat; Charles needed Chapuys in his corner and thus the payment was an incentive.[39] Perrenot would not remain long in England; within weeks he returned to Charles, a personal letter from the ambassador in his pocket.

The marriage between Katharine Parr and Henry had caused friction between him and Anne of Cleves. This suited Chapuys' purpose and he continued to work to keep the breach open. He reported that she was anxious to leave the country, after all, Henry had remarried yet again. To the ambassador, Henry's sixth marriage was illogical, as Katharine Parr had been married twice and was still childless.

> I hear from an authentic quarter that the said dame would rather lose everything in this world and return to her mother than

remain longer in England, especially now that she is in despair and much afflicted in consequence of this late marriage of the King with a lady who, besides being inferior to her in beauty, gives no hope whatever of posterity to the King, for she had no children by her two first husbands.[40]

Chapuys did not consider Katharine's lack of children to be an impediment; on the contrary he was thrilled that she had taken to her stepchildren, and could report that Mary and the new queen got on extremely well. If Mary was happy, so too was her devoted ambassador. The three children had briefly visited Henry and Katharine at court. Mary stayed on, while the younger children returned to their nursery. 'The King continues to treat the Princess kindly, and has made her stay with his new Queen, who behaves affectionately towards her. As to Anne Boleyn's daughter, the King has sent her back again to stay with the prince his son.'[41]

Henry mobilised his first contingent of men across the Channel to fight the French, a move Chapuys took as a taste of things to come. The ambassador believed that Henry had to be micromanaged, lest he become bored. They needed to press forward not retreat. Chapuys reminded Charles that Henry had a suspicious temper, and had already begun to complain that Charles failed to keep him apprised of his campaign. Charles was going about the alliance the wrong way. The ambassador advised him that Henry was a man 'fond of being petted and made much of … and, therefore, if such means be employed, we may get out of him anything we want'.[42]

Thomas Perrenot had the unlucky task of almost constant commute between London and Brussels. Within weeks of his departure from London, the ambassador was already asking for the younger diplomat's hasty return. He did return, armed with detailed instructions from the Holy Roman Emperor to both men.

Perrenot was to defer to Chapuys and take on board any advice: 'Go as hastily as possible to England, and to Our ambassador resident in that country, to whom you will hand over the letter of which you are the bearer, as well as these present Instructions, that he may take cognizance of them.'[43]

Chapuys and Perrenot resumed their talks with Henry and his councillors, but sometime in October Chapuys received what is possibly the first direct criticism of his despatches. Charles suddenly complained that Chapuys had been remiss in his reports:

> We must say that We are really astonished not to hear of the result of Mr. Chantonnay's mission; since his departure from England We have received no news whatever from you. Perhaps the cause is that the King is far away in the country and cannot attend to business. However that may be, We request you to let

> Us hear as soon as possible the news of England, and We on Our side will not fail to advise Our movements.[44]

It was a pointed comment, but Chapuys *was* maintaining his usual degree of correspondence; perhaps Charles had not received the reports in a timely manner, or perhaps his desperation for Henry's financial investment made him unusually irate, especially as he had just paid his ambassador. Several months later, he would again criticise the ambassador, declaring that his suggestions were good in theory, but 'not entirely well grounded'.[45] Was Chapuys beginning to lose his ambassadorial skills? It is also plausible that Charles was under extraordinary pressure in his war against Francis, and needed greater input from Henry. So far, Chapuys had not managed to secure such support, and for the first time Charles seems to have been disappointed with his ambassador.

Chapuys had been keeping pressure on Henry, nurturing his desire for war, and suggesting that he make the bold move of declaring war on Adolf, Duke of Holstein, reporting that Holstein had desires for his brother to sit on the throne of Scotland. To expedite this campaign, Mary of Hungary asked Chapuys in January 1544 whether, if she declared war on Scotland, Henry would do the same to Holstein.[46]

Henry would finally mobilise the majority of his troops and embark on an invasion of France, but crucially his methods actually impeded Charles's war. Henry would lose sight of the big picture, his desire for a glorious battle like Agincourt still in his mind. Chapuys took his leave of Mary and the new queen Katharine in July, and accompanied Henry to Calais, the landing stage for his war on France. Chapuys had no real interest in making the journey, but no doubt hoped that, from France, Charles may just allow him to retire and return home. He begged Mary of Hungary to recall him before Henry made the journey to Boulogne, where the first siege would take place:

> I most humbly beg and entreat Your Majesty to be pleased to replace me and appoint another ambassador to reside at this Court, for the King will in a couple of days, leave for his camp in front of Boulogne. This favour I confidently expect from Your Majesty, the more so, that my secretary was told so at Brussels, and I, myself, have since received the confirmation thereof.[47]

Mary had learned to tune out the ambassador's pleas as expertly as her brother Charles. Chapuys was needed to keep Henry focused on a French invasion. Even at Calais, it threatened to go awry. In audiences in Henry's tent, Chapuys learned that Francis had made peace overtures to him, and Henry was seriously considering them. The ambassador quickly persuaded Henry that Francis had proved he could not be trusted, and had proved a useless ally in the past. However, Chapuys reported to Charles that he suspected Henry was

again stalling. Henry, in the ambassador's opinion, would always take the easy way out if offered. He declared that Henry had no interest in continuing the war against France, and in fact could barely afford to keep his army on the field.[48]

However, Henry decided to press on. Pleading ill health (but of course hoping he would be recalled in the interim), Chapuys remained in Calais as Henry led his army to Boulogne. When Mary did write to Chapuys, it was the news he did not want to hear; he was to follow Henry immediately to Boulogne. Mary would not lose her Imperial ambassador at such a crucial stage, with the French prowling around Henry, offering peace; Chapuys was vital in keeping Henry focused on the task at hand. The ambassador had no choice but to obey, and made the excruciating trip from Calais to Boulogne. Charles also sent an envoy, Montmorency de Courrières, to assist him.

In September, more support arrived in the form of Anthoine Perrenot, son of Chapuys' old friend Nicholas Perrenot de Granvelle. Chapuys makes no mention in his letters of his meeting Anthoine, but he would undoubtedly become the closest thing to a friend in some time.

Henry was determined to capture Boulogne. His trusted lieutenant, Suffolk, used an impressive display of siege works to attack the town. The siege of Montreuil, led by Norfolk on the other hand, was poor; supplies were few and the army disorganised, and dysentery soon set in. Henry ordered his troops to abandon Montreuil and fortify Boulogne. Throughout this, Chapuys and his colleague managed Henry as well as they could, advising him that Charles needed him in Paris. Press the French town into peace, they suggested, rather than face more destruction. But Boulogne had become Henry's Agincourt, and he would have it. His obstinacy cost him; in an extraordinarily devious move, Charles, who had lost faith in Henry, now pursued peace with Francis. Although Henry had succeeded in capturing Boulogne after intense weeks of battle, the rug had been swept from under him.[49] Charles was perceived to be the rational monarch, cultivating a peace treaty with Francis, while Henry's capture of Boulogne fractured any alliance the French king might have pursued with him. However, had Henry acquiesced with Charles's entreaties, namely that he leave the siege of Boulogne in order to join the Emperor in a siege of Paris itself, the outcome may have been very different. Indeed, had the king listened to Chapuys' advice towards the end of the siege, when he and Courrières advised Henry to press the French town into peace rather than face more destruction, Henry would have had his Agincourt; instead, he had brushed them off.

Chapuys was tasked with formally advising Henry of Charles's peace treaty with Francis, and was anxious to determine his mood. As

Henry was already aware, the ambassador reported that he showed no surprise, and certainly no joy. Henry was desperate to have a break from Charles and certainly his ambassadors. Chapuys attempted an audience following the news, but Edward Seymour declared that Henry was busy with urgent engagements. The ambassador was dismayed to discover that the engagements included 'going out of the town to sport in the fields'. Henry was angry, and not without good reason. If the ambassadors wanted an audience, they could leave him a message.

Chapuys knew that Henry would never again trust his word. After decades of carefully crafting relationships, Charles had destroyed them. He again asked for recall – he was after all on the Continent – and professed that he was exhausted and ill, and unable to continue reporting on the drama of English affairs.[50] His thoughts were fixated on a peaceful retirement, and in France he had felt closer to such a goal than ever before. The ambassador prolonged his stay in Calais for such an order, begging de Granvelle to assist him. His letter to his old friend resonates even today: 'I know well that your lordship is sure to pity me, and will do the utmost to take me out of this purgatory, I nevertheless cannot do less than remind your lordship of my prayers.' His entreaties were ignored, Charles wrote to him in November; he was to return to Henry's court immediately, as he was the only man the Emperor could trust. Yet he finally mentions a replacement, François van der Delft; only if Chapuys could assist in training the ambassador and 'polishing' him would he be released.[51] Chapuys was only too willing to comply.

Legacy

> *Nor have We, since Our peace with France, omitted to do whatever We deemed proper and fit for the preservation – and, if possible, for the increase – of that sincere affection and friendship which unites Us* both.[1]

Chapuys had not yet sailed back to England, but Charles was already rewriting history. In his letters to his ambassadors, Chapuys and de Courrières, Charles petulantly insisted that he had only ever acted righteously, for the greater good, and that Henry could not reproach him for his actions.

However, he did not hesitate to reproach his ambassadors, declaring that the sticking point of peace negotiations between France and England, of which he was the self-appointed mediator, was the return of Boulogne, the town that Henry had fought so hard to win. 'The chief point of the negotiation will naturally be that of the town of Boulogne – about which, I must add, you say nothing at all in your joint despatch.'[2]

Charles continued to distance himself from the fiasco: 'In fact, should both Princes be prepared to mutually accept reasonable conditions, Our intervention in that affair would no longer be required.'

Alliances were to shift once again, as they had always done during Chapuys' ambassadorship. Charles sided with France, leaving Henry to emerge as the aggressor. As he prepared to embark from Boulogne – ahead of the ambassadors – with his warships, a furious and flabbergasted Henry explained that it was Charles who had planned to march on Paris. In a 'walk and talk' audience with the ambassadors, Henry confided that Francis had not forgiven him for the siege of Boulogne and Montreuil. After all, war wasn't personal. With a hint of sarcasm, Henry declared that he had every confidence in Charles and assured the ambassadors that 'he had no doubt that Your Majesty, as a virtuous prince, would faithfully observe the treaties'.[3]

On 21 November, Charles instructed Chapuys to return to England to make sure that Henry understood the 'causes and reasons as well as the justification of Our answer to his ambassadors'.[4] Charles knew that Chapuys dreaded his return to England, and so appealed to his vanity. He assured him that out of all his Imperial ambassadors, Chapuys was the only one who knew Henry well enough and could handle the situation with the 'well-known dexterity and tact with which to Our great satisfaction and contentment you have hitherto managed affairs political of this sort'. He then sweetened the deal. 'After having polished your replacement [François van der Delft] you may return home without awaiting the conclusion of our business.'[5]

The ambassador kept this letter close to him throughout his remaining mission – not to indulge his vanity, but because he finally had a promise in writing.

Chapuys and his replacement van der Delft arrived in England just before Christmas Eve 1544, and were granted an audience with Henry two days later. The ambassador detected Henry's resentment towards Charles, noting that the king did not enquire after Charles's health, either during their greeting or during the ensuing dinner.[6] Of his interactions with Katharine Parr, we have only a few references, yet these accounts of Henry's sixth queen are no less illuminating.

The king personally escorted the men to Katharine's rooms, and an anxious Chapuys was pleased to report that he found Katharine to be warm and gracious. More importantly, the ambassador had a chance to observe Mary and her new stepmother together. Katharine had kept her stepchildren with her throughout Henry's campaign and her own tenure as regent, and bonded with the children throughout that summer without Henry. Chapuys immediately sensed a genuine rapport and affection between the two women, and, emboldened by the sight, he took the initiative by sincerely thanking Katharine for the 'good offices which she had always exercised towards the preservation of friendship between your Majesty and the King; and also thanked her for the favour she showed to the Lady Mary'.[7]

She assured him that his gracious words were too kind, but that it was her affection for – and duty to – Mary that influenced her; indeed, she wished she could do more. Chapuys was thoroughly conquered by Katharine's modest response. Although brief, the audience was a great success, unlike the ambassador's next meeting with Henry.

Taking their leave of the women and following Henry into his own chambers, the ambassadors had to wait as the king prayed in his oratory. It was the first time the ambassadors had been alone with Henry since Boulogne, and Chapuys at least knew that the overbearing geniality so far displayed could turn in an instant. He was not disappointed; Henry's jovial demeanour belied his words. Taking a less than subtle swipe at the ambassador, the king made it clear that, in regards to Boulogne, all was not forgiven. 'He addressed us very heartily, saying that I [Chapuys] did not look so well as when I was at the camp at Boulogne, where he said I was better in health than he had ever seen me.'[8]

Henry's words struck a chord. Chapuys knew well that he was now too old for these games, but he hardly welcomed such a candid comment from Henry, especially as Henry declared that *he* was in excellent health, ten times better in fact than he had been in Boulogne. Chapuys held his tongue, but angrily told Charles that 'there is no need for him to insist greatly upon this point, for he is

evidently much broken since his return'.[9] The older ambassador had no patience for trading insults, however veiled they might be. He had a job to do, and the sooner it was completed, the sooner he could leave.

Charles had given explicit instructions to the two ambassadors; they were to provide Henry with a detailed chronology of all the past treaty negotiations between the French and Imperial governments. Charles relied on Chapuys especially to interject his own persuasions that Charles had acted appropriately, and should mediate between England and France. Paramount, however, was that Chapuys persuade the English to discontinue the attack on Charles's reputation.[10]

Henry did not disappoint Chapuys. He tweaked history by insisting that he had never agreed to an alliance with France, whereupon Chapuys quickly reminded him that he had not objected when he first learned of it in Boulogne. A dismissive wave of Henry's large hand signalled that Chapuys was nitpicking. Surely Chapuys had to concede that Charles should never have pursued an alliance with only Henry's half-heated verbal agreement; he only ever negotiated state affairs in writing. The ambassador was quicker to be irritated than in past years, and sharply interjected, insisting that 'during the fifteen years and a half that I had been here, I had never written to him a single word of any negotiation I had conducted'.[11] The audience went on for some time, an energetic volley of arguments and counterarguments that went nowhere.

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It was obvious to all at court that Chapuys was ill and crippled with gout. So why had he been allowed to return? His continued presence caused suspicion among Henry's councillors, and Henry sent Edward Seymour, Stephen Gardiner and William Paget to visit the ambassador the next day to enquire as to whether he had some other, private mission. They had not considered that Charles was not willing to let the ambassador go. Chapuys answered that he had no secret or personal mission. In fact he would not have returned to England if Henry had better understood Charles's position back in France.[12]

The antagonism threatened to end the audience. As this gouty, bad-tempered ambassador was to be dealt with carefully, the men wisely changed the subject. They requested that Charles compose a letter to Henry, stating that he was satisfied that the English had fulfilled all their duties, and crucially that Charles would uphold his part of the peace bargain. Henry wanted it known that his determination to capture Boulogne regardless of the big picture had been the right thing to do. His previous bad mood forgotten, Chapuys 'laughed when I heard this, and I said I was surprised that they did not add a demand that Your Majesty should ask the King's pardon'.[13]

Chapuys for one was not going to accept the rewritten version of history. The ambassador explained that Charles was mediating between friends; he could show no favouritism to either.[14]

*

Chapuys avoided any further dramatic encounters with either Henry or his councillors right through to the day of his recall on 25 April 1545. True to his word, Charles had not only formally recalled the ambassador, but granted him a pension from the Abbey of St Angelo of Brolo in Sicily. We can only imagine that Chapuys, almost crippled and often confined to a chair, read Charles's letter and breathed a sigh of relief. He had been training his replacement, even throwing him into the deep end at Henry's court, and was confident that the embassy would be in safe hands.

Moving as fast as his crippling gout would allow, he immediately visited Henry to give him the news that, after fifteen years, he would no longer remain in England to spar with him. The ambassador's last detailed despatch has a powerful symmetry to his first breathless, earnest letter upon arriving in England fifteen years before. In this letter, written from St Omer, Chapuys wanted to capture every detail of his last days. For all his eagerness to leave, Chapuys was, in the event, quite sentimental. We expect almost fatiguing detail from the ambassador, and he does not disappoint – a fitting end to his lengthy and lively despatches.

Henry had agreed to an audience at 10 o'clock in the morning, but in his excitement the ambassador arrived an hour early. He made the most of it, and spent one of his last mornings in quiet reflection in the gardens opposite Katharine's apartments.[15] When he had first arrived in England, he had been a relatively spritely middle-aged man. Now, as he sat surveying the perfectly manicured gardens in the chair in which he was carried to and from court, he must have felt that time had indeed passed him by.

His solitude was interrupted, but it was far from unwelcome. His trusted servants who carried him in a chair to court informed him that Katharine and Mary had spied him in the gardens, and had hastily come outside to see him privately. This was not the first time that Chapuys had enjoyed an informal audience with Katharine. The two had, on several occasions, enjoyed conversations while hunting, the queen joining the older ambassador as he sat and watched proceedings. In a relatively short time, he had come to admire her greatly.

Before Chapuys had even risen from his chair, he reported that Katharine and a small retinue of ladies including Mary had reached him. He paid Katharine the utmost deference, as far as his illness would allow, and he reported that she warmly declared that she could

not let him leave England without seeing him personally.[16] Already touched by her words, he could not have anticipated her next declaration. While she would be sorry to see him go, she acknowledged his years of loyal service and the integral part he played in relations between Charles and Henry. He could only trust in the truth of her words when she said that she was sure his health would improve once he was back on the Continent, where he had longed to be for years.[17] Katharine then begged the ambassador to continue his efforts to keep the two empires aligned. In Chapuys' mind, Henry could not have found a more perfect wife.

He recounted her every word:

> She therefore begged me affectionately, after I had presented to your Majesty her humble service, to express explicitly to you all I had learned here of the good wishes of the King towards you; and likewise to use my best influence in favour of the maintenance and increase of the existing friendship. She asked me very minutely, and most graciously, after your Majesty's health and expressed great joy to learn of your Majesty's amelioration, adding many courteous and kind expressions.[18]

Chapuys was touched, but his thoughts, as ever, turned towards the young woman whose welfare had occupied his waking moments. Mary had hitherto remained with the ladies, allowing the queen and ambassador to converse privately. Now she stepped forward, and it was Katharine who stepped back with her ladies, giving the two old friends privacy.

While the historian anticipates something more tangible from this final encounter, we are left unsatisfied, considering that we have followed his every anxious thought and passionate promotion of Mary's welfare for the last fifteen years. No doubt the ambassador wished to say much more than he did. Protecting Mary and keeping her safe had been paramount to his work; almost every action was with her welfare in mind. He had fought for her, admired her and, in a rather chivalric manner, considered himself her knight in shining armour. Instead, the ambassador observed only that Mary was unwilling to prolong the informal meeting – in Chapuys' words, possibly not wanting to detain the queen. However, one would suspect that she did not want to prolong Chapuys' discomfort, as he was frail and in obvious pain from standing out of respect for too long.

> My conversation with the Princess was confined to my assurance of your Majesty's good wishes towards her, and her humble thanks for the same. In default of power to repay your Majesty in any other way, she said she was bound to pray constantly to God for your Majesty's health and prosperity.[19]

If more was said between Mary and her lifelong champion, it did

not concern Charles.

Katharine then rejoined the conversation, adding her wish that Chapuys convey her respects to Mary of Hungary and saying that her husband was 'under great obligation to her Majesty for having on all occasions shown so much goodwill towards him; and she [the Queen of England] continued with a thousand compliments on the Queen [Dowager's] virtue, prudence and diligence'.[20] Then it was over. Mary and Katharine departed, but observing their interactions had persuaded Chapuys that he was discharged of his duty; he was leaving Mary in trusted hands.

The ambassador was then carried in to meet with Henry's councillors, giving them formal news of his recall. The standard reactions of regret were issued, and he was quickly drawn aside by Wriothesley, Suffolk, and Paget, who warned him against the French. The meeting was short, and he was then invited to dine for the last time with the men with whom he had shared a table these past fifteen years. There were new faces, of course; many who dined with the ambassador in his first years had either retired or been executed. Finally, Chapuys had his last audience with Henry.

The ambassador reported that he was received graciously by the king, who expressed his disappointment that he was at last leaving England. Henry's treaty with Francis was naturally a topic between them, and Henry reminded Chapuys that he still had the silver pen that the ambassador had recently sent him to sign the treaty. Again, a satisfying end to Chapuys' audience with Henry eludes us; Chapuys ends his report as if his last meeting was as ordinary as any other, and of no significance. We are left to wonder how the men parted for the last time.

Chapuys also wrote to Mary of Hungary about his last audiences, and again spoke of his meeting with Mary and Katharine. 'But I must not forget the very affectionate messages entrusted to me for your Majesty by the King and Queen, nor the humble regards sent by the Princess [Mary] who is quite well, and is well-treated by the King and Queen.'[21]

Before he departed England for the last time, Chapuys reported that William Paget had given him a thoroughbred dog, to be presented as a gift to Mary of Hungary. Dog in tow, the ambassador finally set sail, landing in St Omer, from where he 'forwarded' the dog to Mary in Brussels.[22]

We immediately feel the absence of the ambassador. Within weeks of his departure, it seemed that van der Delft was already floundering. Charles had become accustomed to a certain degree of detail, and frequency, in his despatches from England. He was quick to complain that the new ambassador wasn't pulling his weight. One of Charles's

first letters to van der Delft conveyed his displeasure.

> We have had no news from you for a long while; indeed not since the departure [from England] of Chapuys, who in his letter from Gravelines [St Omer] fully informed us of what had passed with the King of England and his Council when Chapuys took leave of them. We send this letter to request you to let us know, as soon as you can, what is happening there … we must recommend you very emphatically to keep us continually advised on these points, as it is especially necessary at this time.[23]

Charles then wrote to Chapuys, repeating his complaint, and asking that the ambassador give his successor a few hints.

> As we have had no news for a long time from your successor, who remained in England, we are sending him special instructions to keep us well posted in all that passes there … It will be advisable for you during your stay at Gravelines to do the same, and to write daily to your successor telling him how you think he should act, recommending him to write to us as frequently as possible, and yourself doing the same.[24]

Chapuys was quick to assure Charles that van der Delft was doing his job, and that his replacement 'is not only clever but already has a better knowledge of the English mode of proceeding than I have'.[25] Chapuys was not about to head back to England. Nevertheless, he quickly wrote to van der Delft, voicing his concerns. He made the pointed comment that it usually took him most of a day to decipher the Emperor's despatch without a cipher clerk. Perhaps van der Delft needed to be more organised. He ended his letter with some sage financial advice:

> It is quite possible that when the Kings of France and England are in arms, the Emperor may consider it necessary, for the safety of his own frontiers, to assemble an armed force, and this fact may cause the Kings of France and England to be more inclined to peace. In this case the aid demanded by the King of England being unnecessary the Emperor might, in accordance with the treaty, cast upon the King the whole or part of the expense he had incurred in raising the troops, or the excuse they were intended for him.[26]

Before Chapuys could truly retire, he was requested to attend an Anglo–Imperial trade conference in Bourbourg, but within a week he was released, and travelled to his intended destination. Eustace chose not to retire to his home town of Annecy. There seemed little point – his mother, whom he had not seen since his youth, had passed away in 1540; his brothers had also passed, and there was nothing to draw him home. He still had investment properties in his home town, and they continued to fill his coffers.

Instead, on 21 July 1545, Eustace arrived in the now Belgian town of Louvain or Leuven, known for its humanist culture. Louvain was second only to Paris in its humanist scholars; Erasmus had in fact intended to settle in the city at one point. Louvain's university had a reputation as the greatest in the Holy Roman Empire. It is interesting that, within a year of Eustace's arrival, Charles began to pour money into the university faculties.

Charles of course did not break off contact with his ambassador, but Eustace was no longer a diplomat. Instead he took on the role of one of his beloved Greek identities: Nestor the elder advisor.[27]

Charles continued to ask his old ambassador for advice, and van der Delft relied on him as a kind of mentor. Eustace found in van der Delft a correspondent whom he could typically inject with his beloved mythical and biblical references. He was not isolated in Louvain; de Granvelle's sons, one of whom was Chapuys' correspondent, Anthoine, had studied law there, and he held an affection for the town. Eustace assured his old friend that his sons were constantly praised in the city, and the younger men obliged the older ambassador by frequently visiting him.[28]

We do not know what Eustace thought of Henry's death in 1547, or if indeed he felt any sentiment towards the monarch who occupied countless pages of his despatches. For, as we have seen, Eustace was no stranger to sentiment. Following Henry's death, Charles once more wrote to Eustace for advice. The marriage alliance between Mary and Dom Luiz had been resurrected, and Charles relied on Eustace's memory of the matter, no doubt expecting a long and detailed account. The letter reached Eustace in Liège in Belgium, where he had been visiting the springs for his health. The ambassador took longer to respond; the letter was in cipher and he was out of the habit of carrying the keys with him. The ageing ambassador, however, could not remember much more about the affair than Charles, and had not written down much of the negotiations. However, he seemed to favour the alliance again, stating that Mary would certainly welcome the marriage, and being aligned with her cousin Charles. Eustace finished his lengthy letter to the Emperor with the words 'I most humbly supplicate your Majesty, with your clemency and inexpressible wisdom to make up for my simplicity and ignorance and to pardon my carelessness'.[29]

Eustace, as we know, was very rarely careless.

On his arrival in Louvain, Eustace made a few key investments. He immediately purchased, with his own funds, a group of buildings, now in the Rue de Savoie. Much like Thomas Wolsey before him, Eustace was a passionate advocate of education for all. Eager to build a school in his home town of Annecy, Eustace spent months negotiating with

the council for an appropriate site. Although he was not present for its construction, every detail of the building was sent to him for inspection. Known as the Collège Chapuysien, it was in essence a grammar school to instruct the underprivileged boys of the town in 'Litteris et Dei Timore' – Literature and the Fear of God. Latin and Greek were the main subjects, and Eustace hired the most skilled tutors he could afford from Louvain to teach in Annecy.[30]

The school boasted gardens and state-of-the-art rooms for students, as Eustace had insisted that no expense be spared. Not content with just the school in Annecy, Eustace transformed the houses he had purchased in the peace and quiet of Louvain. His enlarged estates were some of the most magnificent buildings in the city, and he converted them into another *collège*. Eustace purchased further investment properties to fund the school, the Collège de Savoie, which was again for underprivileged boys, and provided full board as well as education.

Despite his ill health, Eustace was still active and lived comfortably on his Imperial pension of 500 livres a year. Within a few years he was granted a pension of 1,000 ducats a year on Neapolitan revenues, but the pension only serves as a poignant reminder that Eustace was a man with enormous wealth and status, but with no children to pass his wealth on to. His nieces and nephews he had not seen since his youth, and the younger Chapuys generation had moved on without him. Regardless, he left a good portion of his wealth to the children of his nieces, and donated 2,500 French crowns to his school in Annecy and the remainder to his *collège* in Louvain.[31]

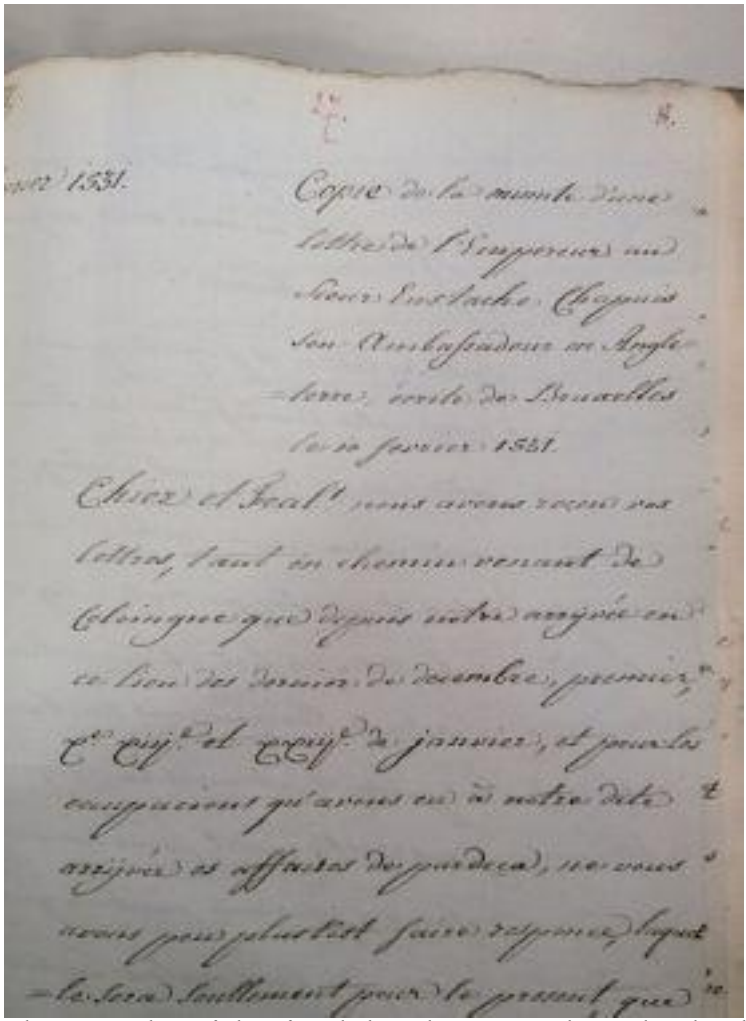
Finally, in January 1556, Eustace – ambassador, diplomat, humanist and philanthropist – quietly passed away and was buried in the chapel of his beloved *collège* in Louvain, which had been a true labour of love. The chapel no longer exists, having been destroyed in the nineteenth century, but the halls of his schools in Annecy and Louvain remain, still housing and educating children from the region.

History remembers Eustace Chapuys as the prolific, passionate, yet acerbic ambassador to Henry VIII's court who provided the vital narrative of Tudor history. Scholars of the period rely on his comprehensive reports, with their luminous details of emotions, relationships and personalities. Eustace's love of Katherine of Aragon, his indefatigable devotion to Mary, vehement opposition to Anne Boleyn and heated spars with Henry himself have shaped our perceptions of his character. We have done him a disservice in keeping him locked away in the footnotes. He granted us access to his personal life, from recommendations to de Granvelle of a favourite cheese, to his personal triumphs and tragedies. He was an intellectual, humanist, and devout Catholic. The Tudor court through Eustace's

eyes is a court of colour, life, intrigue and human nature that resonates with us even today.



1. *Portrait d'Eustace Chappuis*. Anon, seventeenth century. (Musée-chateau, Annecy, France)



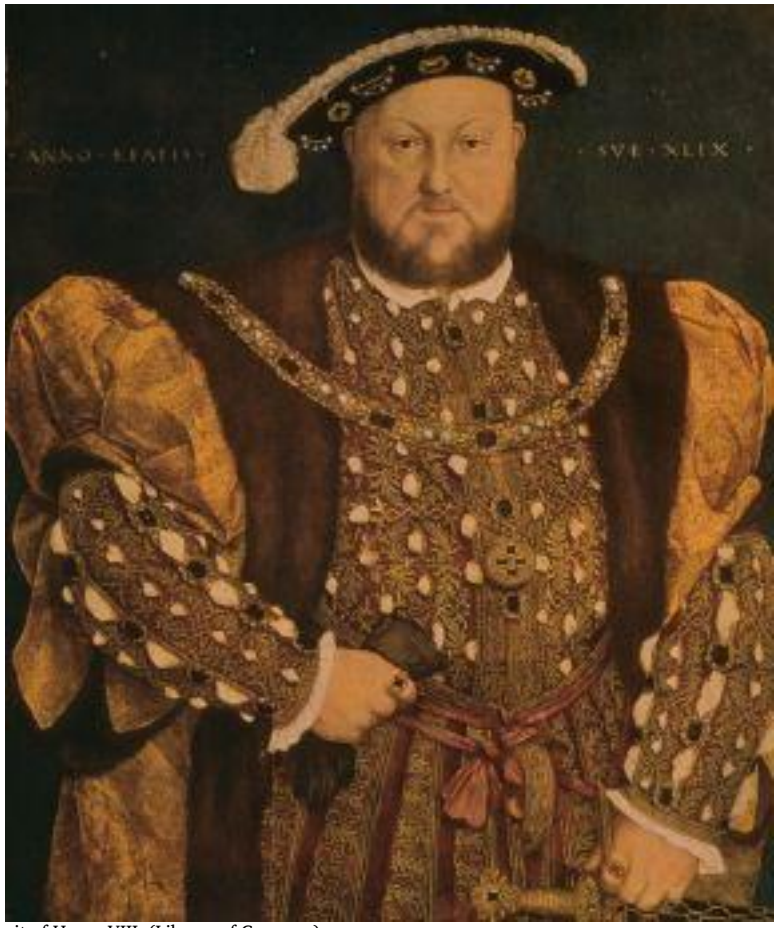
2. Eighteenth-century translation of a letter from Charles to Chapuys. In every letter to the ambassador Charles uses the affectionate phrase ‘Chiez et Feal!’ which roughly translates to ‘Dear Faithful friend or vassal’. (Archives Generales du Royaume, Brussels, Belgium)



3. Image of Charles V. (Library of Congress)



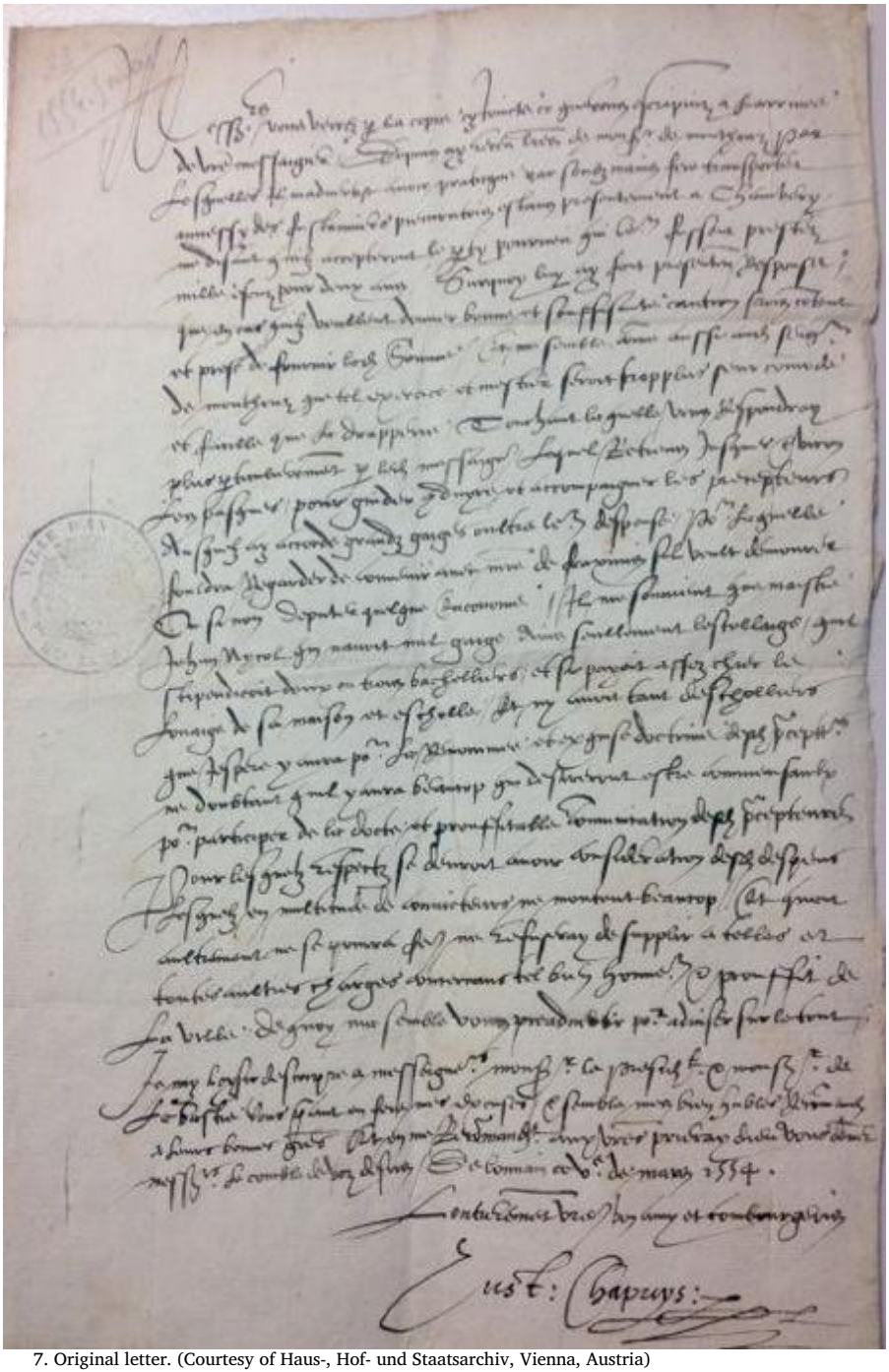
4. *Portrait d'Eustace Chappuis*. Anon, 1711. (Musée-chateau, Annecy, France)



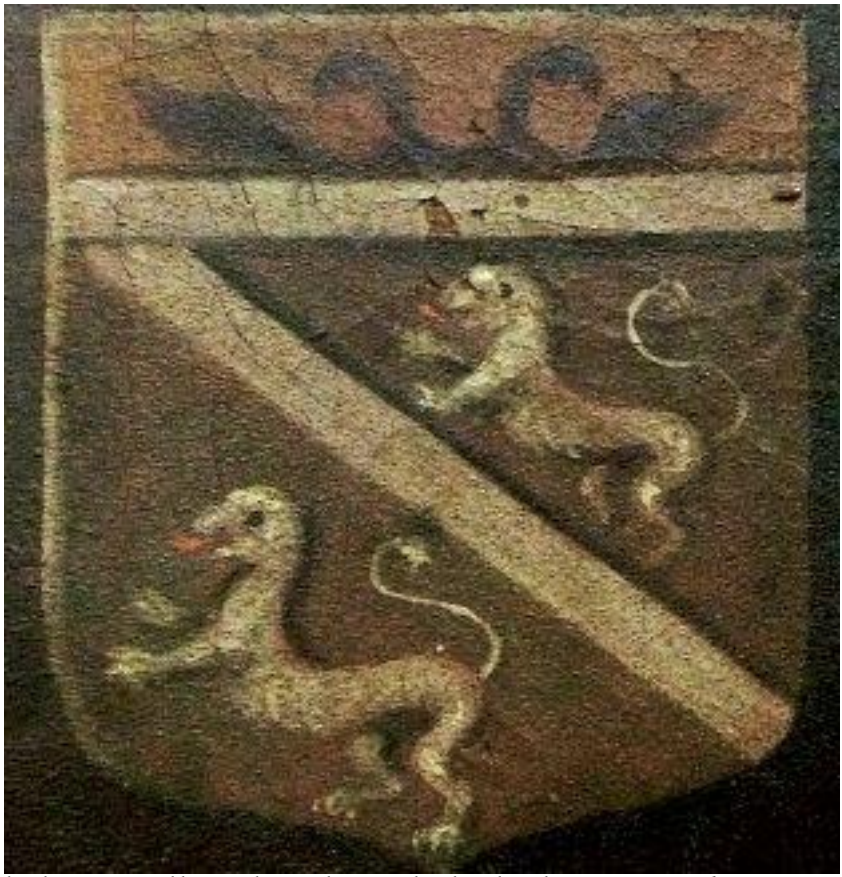
5. Portrait of Henry VIII. (Library of Congress)



6. Katherine of Aragon. (Courtesy of Ripon Cathedral)



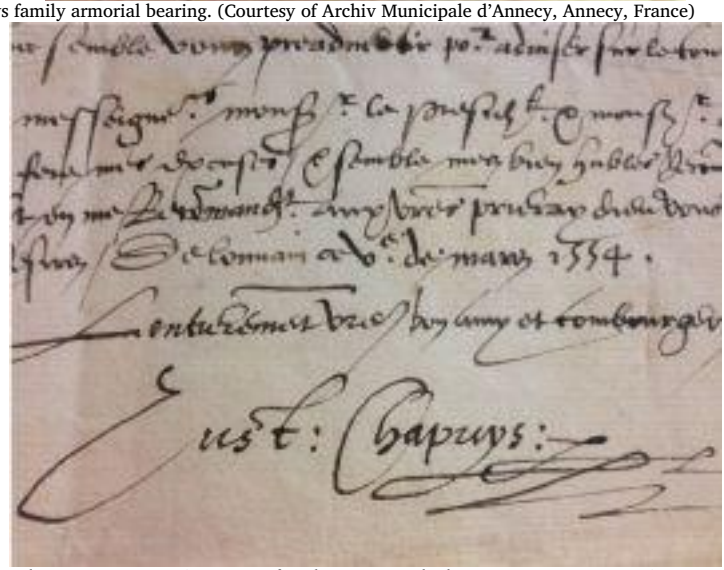
7. Original letter. (Courtesy of Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, Austria)



8. The Chapuys armorial bearing showing the imperial eagle and two lions. From *Portrait d'Eustace Chappuis*. (Musée-chateau Annecy, France)



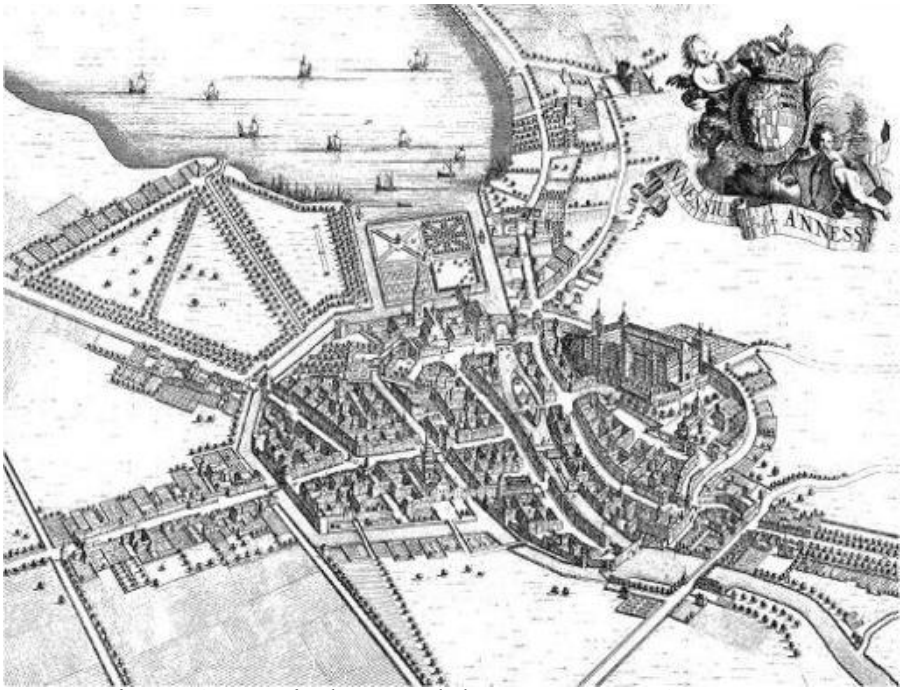
9. Chapuys family armorial bearing. (Courtesy of Archiv Municipale d'Annecy, Annecy, France)



10. Eustace Chapuys' signature. (Courtesy of Archiv Municipale d'Annecy, Annecy, France)



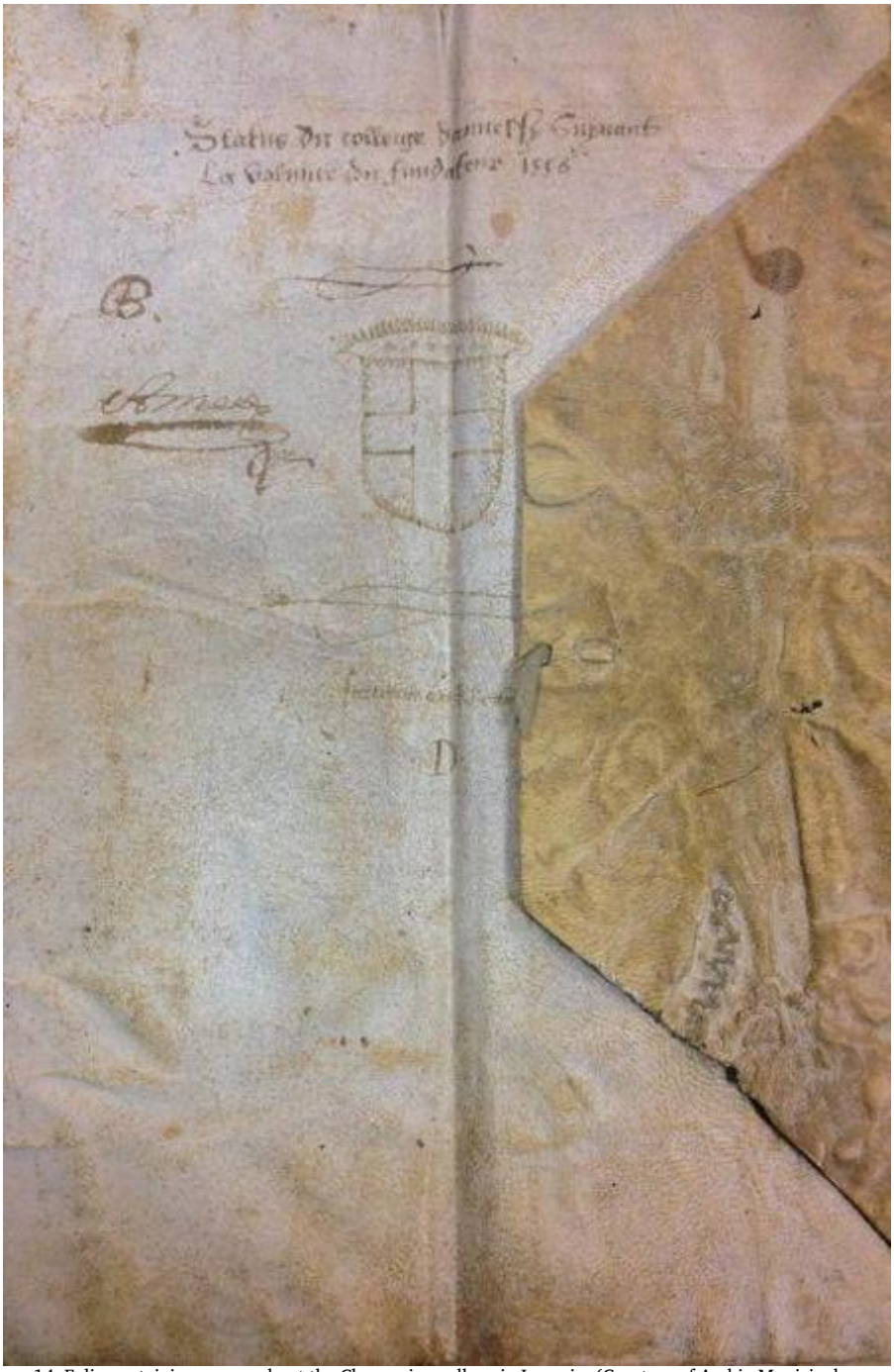
11. *Eustace Chapuys, ambassadeur de Charles Quint*. (Courtesy of Archiv Municipale d'Annecy, Annecy, France)



12. Map of Annecy. (Courtesy of Archiv Municipale d'Annecy, Annecy, France)



13. Palais de l'Île, Annecy, France, 2013.



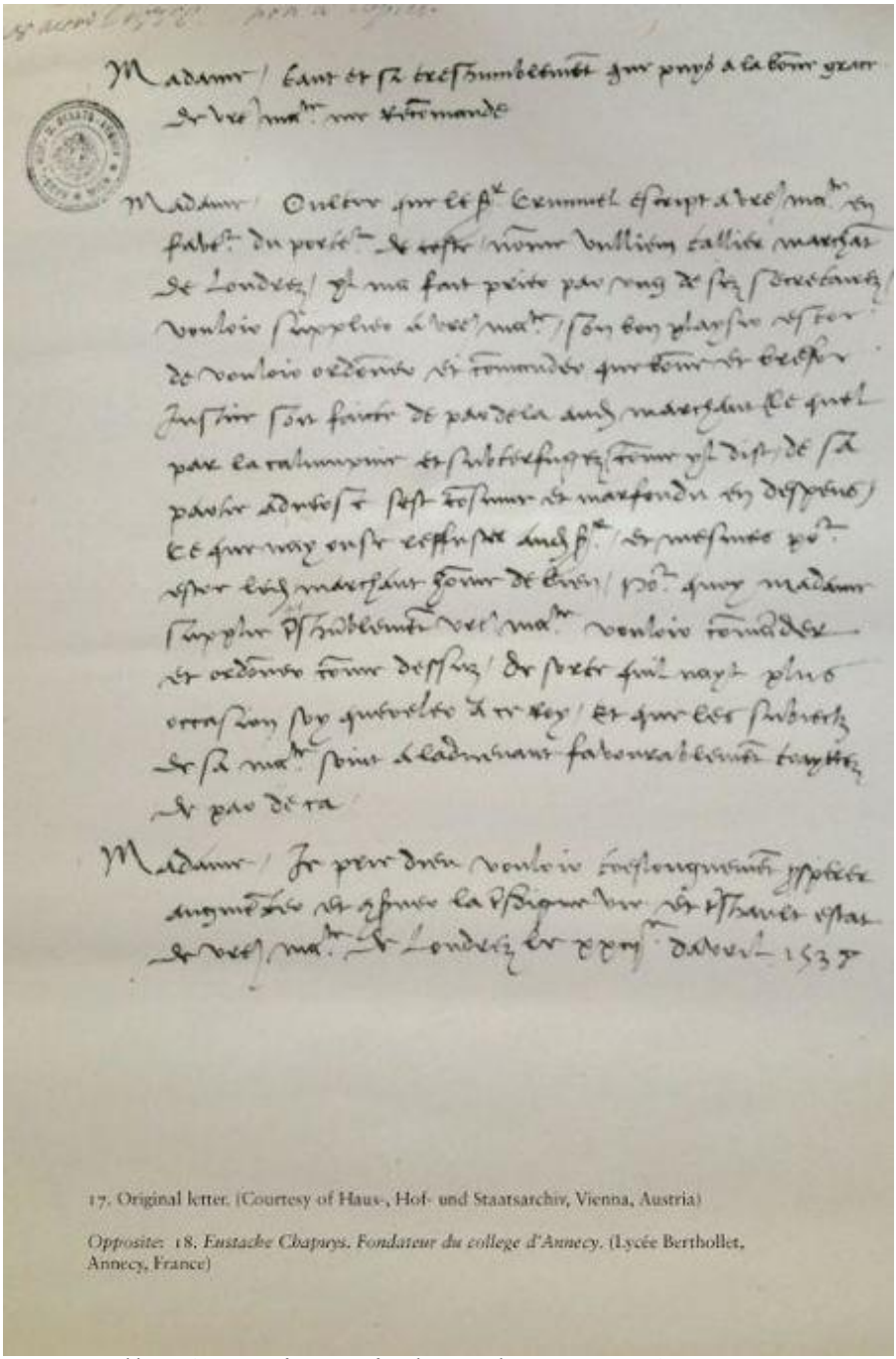
14. Folio containing papers about the Chapuysien college in Louvain. (Courtesy of Archiv Municipale d'Annecy, Annecy, France)



15. Annecy, France, close to the original Chapuys property.



16. Annecy, France.



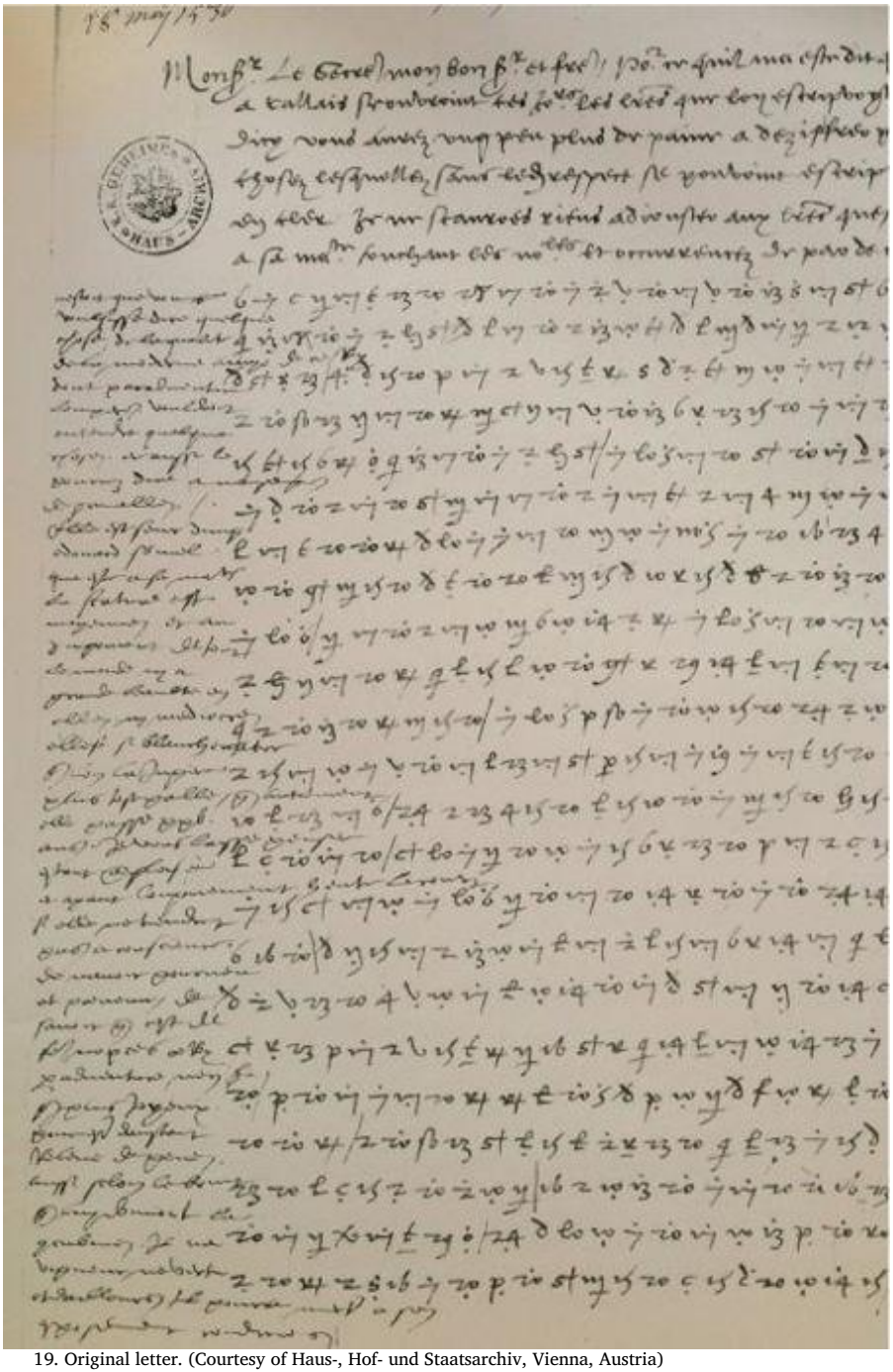
17. Original letter. (Courtesy of Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, Austria)

Opposite: 18. *Eustache Chapuys. Fondateur du college d'Annecy.* (Lycée Berthollet, Annecy, France)

17. Original letter. (Courtesy of Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, Austria)



18. *Eustache Chapuys. Fondateur du college d'Annecy*. (Lycée Berthollet, Annecy, France)



19. Original letter. (Courtesy of Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, Austria)



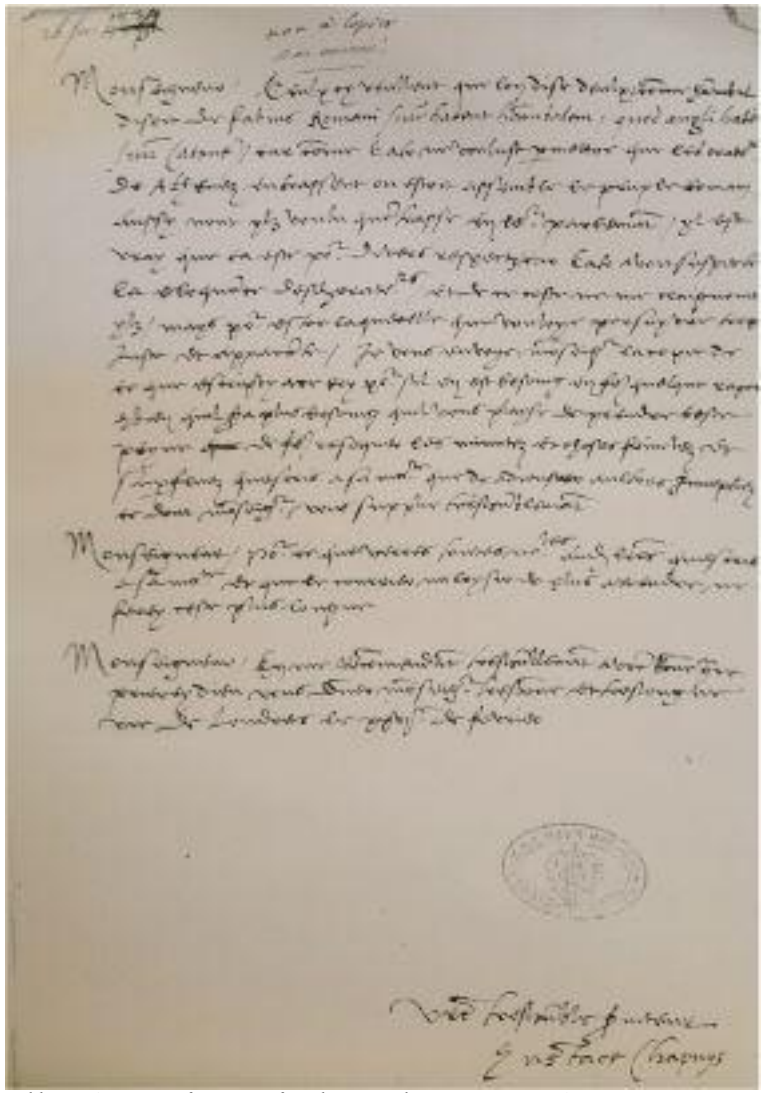
20. Anne Boleyn. (Courtesy of Ripon Cathdral)



21. Mary Tudor. (Courtesy of Ripon Cathedral)



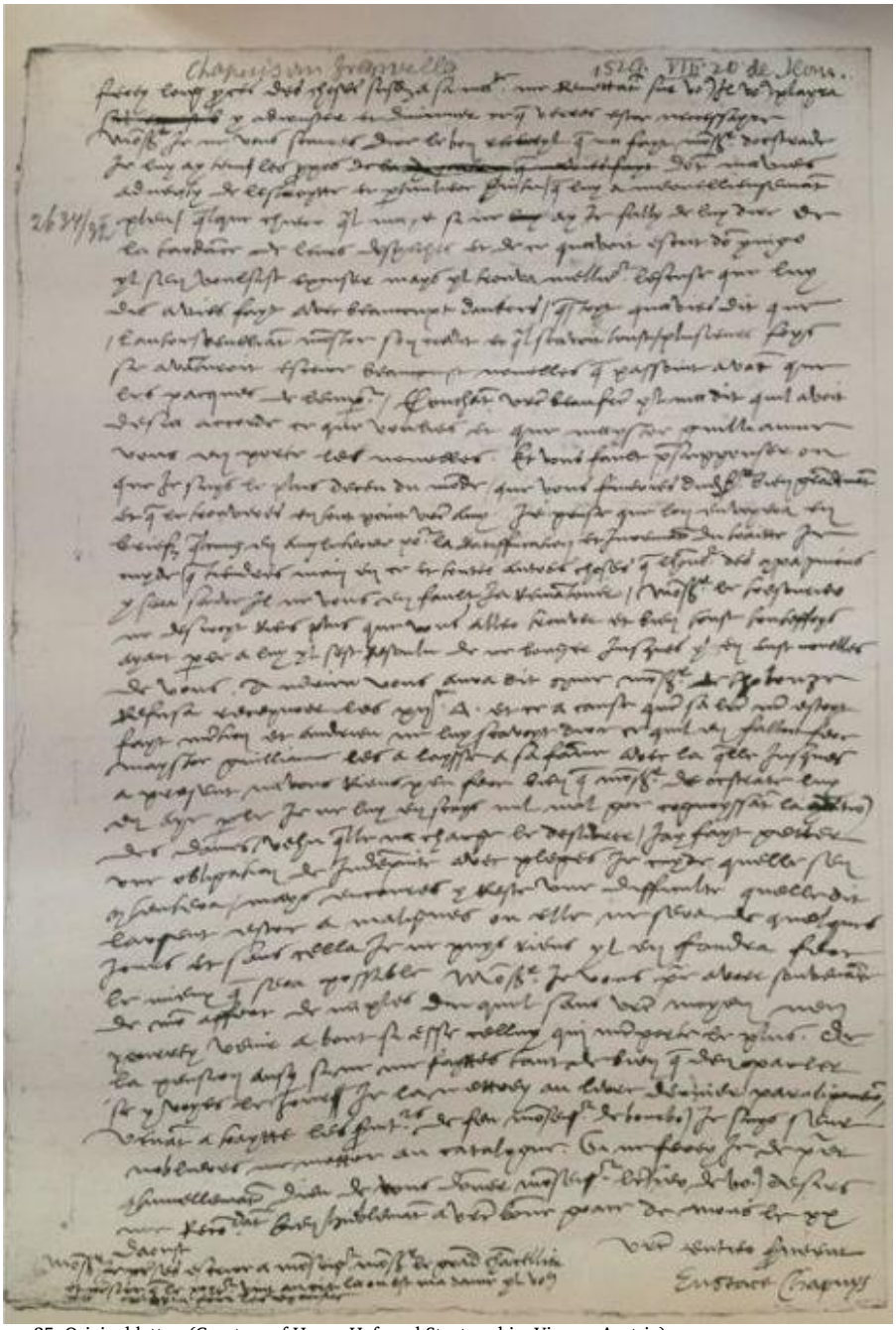
22. Original letter. (Courtesy of Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, Austria)



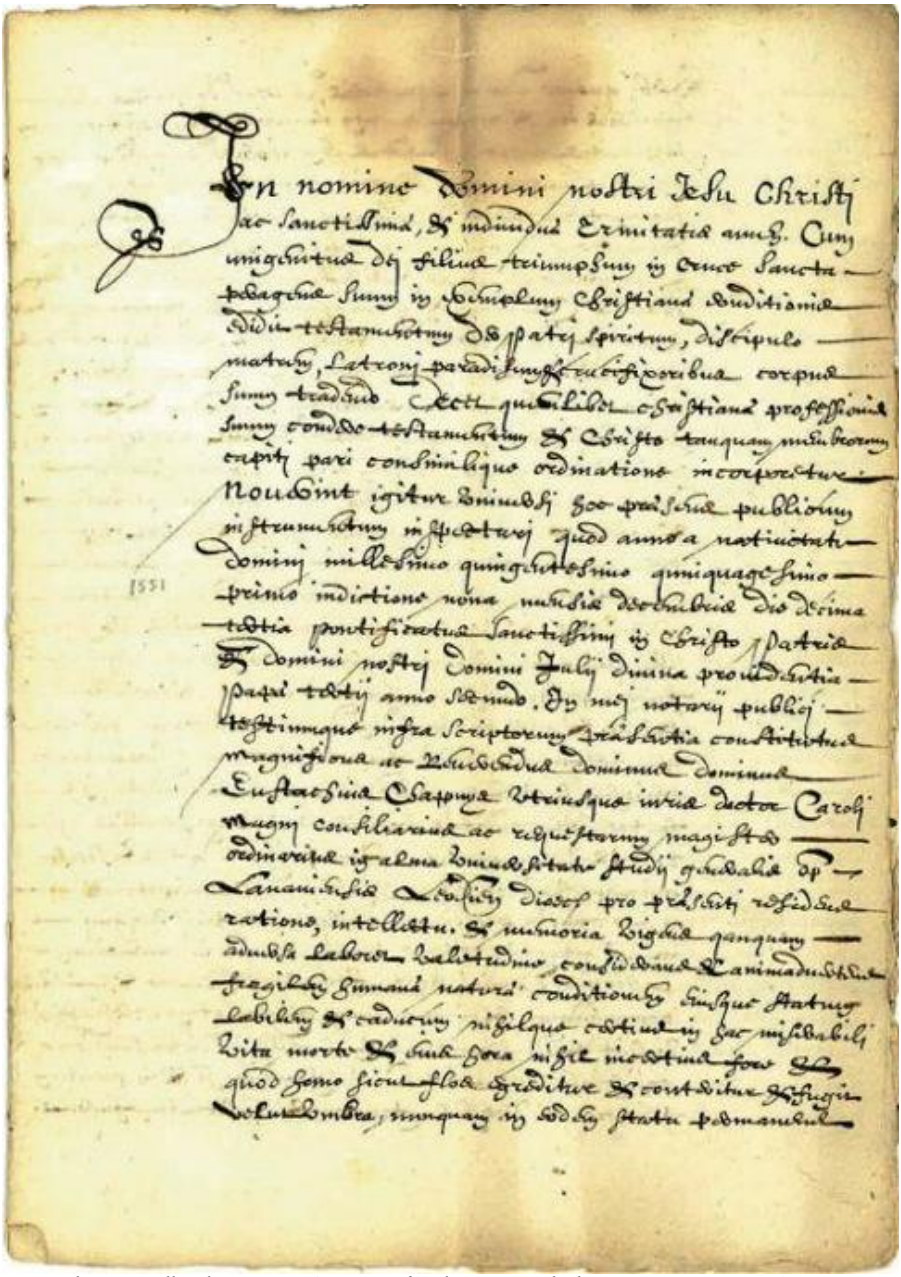
23. Original letter. (Courtesy of Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, Austria)



24. Manuscript with an inset portrait of Charles V. (Library of Congress)



25. Original letter. (Courtesy of Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, Austria)



26. Chapuys' Will and Testament. (Courtesy of Archiv Municipale d'Annecy, Annecy, France)



27. Thomas Cromwell. (Courtesy of Jonathan Reeve JR960b53p283 15001600)



28. Palais de l’Île at night, Annecy, France.

Notes

Preface

1. Garrett Mattingly, 'A humanist ambassador', *Journal of Modern History*, 4:2 (1932), 175.
2. David Starkey, *Six Wives: The Queens of Henry VIII* (Random House, 2004), p. 360.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 360.
4. Eric Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn* (Blackwell Publishing, 2004), pp. 73–5.
5. Retha Warnicke, *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 2.

1 - A Game of Politics

1. Ursula Schwarzkopf, 'Zur Familie des Eustace Chapuys en Annecy', *Bibliothèque d' Humanisme et Renaissance*, 1966, 524.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 529.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 529.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 532.
5. Joseph Orsier, 'Notes et Documents Inédits pour Server à l'Histoire d'Eustache Chapuys d'Annecy', *Revue de Savoie*, 40.
6. Schwarzkopf, 'Zur Familie des Eustace Chapuys en Annecy', 533.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 539
8. Garrett Mattingly, *Katherine of Aragon* (1942), p. 296.
9. Peter Gerhard Bietenholz and Thomas Brian Deutscher, 'Eustace Chapuys' in *Contemporaries of Erasmus, a Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation, Vol. 1* (University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 293.
10. Schwarzkopf, 7.
11. Mattingly, *Katherine of Aragon*, p. 299.
12. Schwarzkopf, 522.
13. *Ibid.*, 523.
14. *Ibid.*, 524.
15. Mattingly, p. 25.
16. Joseph Orsier, 'Henri Cornelis Agrippa: Sa Vie et Son Œuvre d'après Sa Correspondance', *Revue des Idées*, VII, 2, 180.
17. Mattingly, p. 306.
18. Registres du Conseil de Genève, IX, p. 216.
19. Orsier, *Eustache Chapuys et Ses Deux Collèges*, p. 5.
20. Mattingly, p. 282.
21. Calendar of State Papers, Spain, IV, ii, 1882, pp. 277–286.
22. Charles Quintus to Eustace Chapuys 1529, Archives Duingt, Haute-Savoie.

2 - The New Imperial Ambassador at Henry's Court

1. Calendar of State Papers, Spain, IV, i, p. 188

2. Leviticus, 20:21.
3. A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (B. T. Batsford, 1964), p. 105.
4. *Humanism, Reform and the Reformation: The Career of Bishop John Fisher*, p. 157.
5. Letters and Papers IV, iii, 5519, 5611 and 5613.
6. See discussion of Thomas Wolsey and Gregory Casale in Catherine Fletcher, *Our Man in Rome, Henry VIII and His Italian Ambassador* (London: The Bodley Head, 2012).
7. State Papers of Henry VIII (hereafter known as St.P) I, pp. 194–5 (London, 1830–52).
8. See discussion of Wolsey's fall in Peter J. Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of Thomas Wolsey* (Random House), pp. 536–8.
9. Charles to Katherine of Aragon, HAT-OeStA/Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (hereafter known as HHStA), England Diplomatische Korrespondenz Karton 4, 15 .
10. Calendar of State Papers, Spain (hereafter known as Cal.Span.) IV, iii, p. 232.
11. Cal.Span. IV, p. 206.
12. HHStA Karton 4, 19.
13. HHStA Karton 4, 17.
14. HHStA Karton 4, 17.
15. HHStA Karton 4, 17.
16. HHStA Karton 4, 17.
17. Chapuys to Charles, Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 220.
18. Chapuys to Charles, Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 220.
19. Chapuys to Charles, Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 220.
20. HHStA Karton 4, 19.
21. HHStA Karton 4, 23.
22. HHStA Karton 4, 23.
23. HHStA Karton 4, 23.
24. Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic Henry VIII, IV, 6026.
25. Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic Henry VIII, IV, 6026.
26. HHStA Karton 4, 18.
27. HHStA Karton 4, 18.
28. HHStA Karton 4, 18.
29. HHStA Karton 4, 18.
30. The relationship between Chapuys and Thomas Boleyn is analysed in William H. Dean, *Sir Thomas Boleyn, The Courtier Diplomat, 1477–1539*. PhD dissertation, West Virginia University, 1987.
31. Cal.Span. IV, i, pp. 189–90.
32. HHStA Karton 4, 18.
33. HHStA Karton 4, 18.

34. HHStA Karton 4, 18.

35. See discussion of perceptions in Peter J. Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of Thomas Wolsey*.

36. HHStA Karton 4, 18.

37. HHStA Karton 4, 18.

38. Chapuys to Margaret of Hungary, HHStA Karton 4, 17.

39. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 237.

40. HHStA Karton 4, 23.

41. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 795.

42. Garrett Mattingly Dissertation, 777. Mattingly refers to correspondence from the French ambassador, Charles de Marillac, which shows just how important dress was to other embassies. We know from Chapuys' household and retinue that he was aware of the power of display, but his concern clearly did not extend to clothes.

43. Cal.Span. IV, ii, pp. 465 and 448.

44. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 795.

45. Cal.Span. III, ii, p. 877; IV, i, p. 214; IV, i, p. 518; IV, ii, pp. 465 and 840–1; V, i, pp. 450–3.

46. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 518.

47. Cal.Span. VI, i, pp. 504 and 511.

48. Cal.Span. V, i, pp. 14, 207.

49. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 488.

50. I explore the rivalry between Chapuys and the French ambassador Charles de Marillac during his second embassy in Chapter 10.

51. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 448.

52. See *Crónica del Rey Henrico Octavo de Inglaterra* 62 for a full account of Chapuys' lively household. Mattingly reconstructed the ambassador's household in his dissertation. See Mattingly dissertation, Chapter IV.

53. Charles was notoriously bad at paying his embassies; Chapuys was almost constantly asking for money. See Mattingly dissertation, chapters IV—V. An account of Chapuys' annual salary can be found in 'Notes et Documents Inédits pour Server à l'Histoire d'Eustache Chapuys d'Annecy' (Paris, 1912), 14–17.

54. Chapuys to his mother in A.V. Liesse, *Documents Relatives à la Familie Chapuis*, note 197. The documents were translated by Garrett Mattingly but they have since disappeared from the archives in Annecy and are not found in the archives of Haute-Savoie.

55. *Ibid*.

56. See Mattingly dissertation for a full account of Chapuys' pensions, dissertation, 757.

57. Mattingly dissertation, 122.

58. Mattingly deciphered several sets of the ambassador's cipher,

see Mattingly dissertation.

59. Cal.Span. IV, i, pp. 337–9.

60. *Ibid.*

61. Stanford E. Lehmberg, *The Reformation Parliament 1529–1536* (Cambridge University Press), p. 103.

62. L&P IV, 2676.

63. L&P IV, 5635 and 6026.

3 - Into the Fray

1. Garrett Mattingly, *Catherine of Aragon* (Little, Brown & Company, 1941).

2. Cal.Span. IV, ii, pp. 112, 280, 342, 348, 391 and 479.

3. HHStA Karton 4, 28.

4. *Ibid.*

5. We know Chapuys had spies in Henry's household; even if the outburst has been imagined or embellished, it is an accurate appraisal of tensions between the couple.

6. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 399.

7. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 394.

8. HHStA Karton 4, 226.

9. HHStA Karton 4, 226.

10. *Ibid.*

11. See Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (Yale University Press), pp. 45–8.

12. HHStA Karton 4, 226.

13. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 250.

14. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 250.

15. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 252.

16. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 354. Chapuys was, as Thomas believed, stirring up trouble by urging Charles to cease negotiations and threaten war.

17. My research on George and Thomas Boleyn exonerates George of this rather disingenuous remark; this first embassy was a chance for George to demonstrate his skills.

18. HHStA Karton 4, 225.

19. HHStA Karton 4, 226.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 461.

22. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 476.

23. Cal.Span. IV, i, pp. 514–15.

24. A. F. Pollard, *Wolsey* (Longmans, Green & Co., 1953), p. 289.

25. Mattingly, dissertation, Chapter IV.

26. Cal.Span. IV, i, pp. 368 and 515.

27. Cal.Span. IV, i, pp. 471–2.

28. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 503.

29. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 504.
30. Cal.Span. IV, i, pp. 189, 234, 305, 327, 342 and 361.
31. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 471.
32. Cal.Span. IV, i, pp. 505–8.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*
36. Cal.Span. IV, i, pp. 509–11.
37. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 506.
38. HHStA Karton 4, 226
39. *Ibid.*
40. Cal.Span. IV, i, pp. 563 and 600–1.
41. Cal.Span. IV, I, pp. 617–18.
42. *Ibid.*
43. HHStA Karton 4, 226.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*
46. Cal.Span. IV, I, pp. 818–20.
47. *Ibid.*
48. *Ibid.*
49. John Gault, *Life of Cardinal Wolsey* (David Bogue, Fleet Street), p. 197.
50. *Ibid.*
51. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 835.
52. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 836.
53. Cal Span, IV, i, p. 790.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*
56. L&P V, 134.
57. *Ibid.*
58. HHStA Karton 5, 227.
59. For further discussion of Fisher's defence of Katherine of Aragon, see Eamon Duffy, *Humanism, Reform and the Reformation: The Career of Bishop John Fisher* (Cambridge University Press).
60. J. J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (University of California Press), p. 280.
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Ibid.*
63. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 863.
64. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 615.
65. *Ibid.*
66. Peter Herman puts forward an interesting theory regarding Anne's motto; see *Reading Monarchs' Writing: The Poetry of Henry VIII, Mary Stuart, Elizabeth I, and James VI/I* (Arizona Center for Medieval

and Renaissance Studies), p. 217.
67. HHStA Karton 5, 227
68. Cal.Span. IV, ii, pp. 279, 280, 511 and 553.
69. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 14.
70. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 50.
71. Chapuys to Charles, Archives générales du Royaume, Brussels, f 177, 378.
72. Chapuys to Charles, Archives générales du Royaume, Brussels, f 177, 378.
73. *Ibid.*
74. *Ibid.*
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Ibid.*
77. L&P V, 28.
78. *Ibid.*
79. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 29.
80. Chapuys to Charles, Archives générales du Royaume, Brussels, f 177, 378.
81. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 70.
82. Cal.Span. IV, ii, pp. 47–50.
83. *Ibid.*
84. *Ibid.*
85. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 50.
86. *Ibid.*
87. Cal.Span. IV, ii, pp. 156–7.
88. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 157.
89. *Ibid.*
90. *Ibid.*
91. *Ibid.*
92. Cal.Span. IV, ii, pp. 158–60.
93. HHStA Karton 5, 227.
94. *Ibid.*
95. *Ibid.*
96. *Ibid.*
97. *Ibid.*
98. *Ibid.*
99. *Ibid.*
100. *Ibid.*
101. *Ibid.*
102. *Ibid.*
103. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 201.
104. *Ibid.*
105. *Ibid.*
106. *Ibid.*

107. *Ibid.*
108. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 216.
109. *Ibid.*
110. *Ibid.*
111. *Ibid.*
112. *Ibid.*
113. *Ibid.*
114. *Ibid.*
115. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 220.
116. *Ibid.*
117. *Ibid.*
118. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 235.
119. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 253.
120. *Ibid.*
121. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 260.
122. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 220.
123. *Ibid.*
124. *Ibid.*
125. *Ibid.*
126. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 270.
127. Cal.Span. IV, ii, pp. 270–2.
128. *Ibid.*
129. *Ibid.*
130. L&P I, 1016.
131. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 274.
132. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 275.
133. *Ibid.*
134. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 354.
135. *Ibid.*
136. Chapuys to Charles, Archives générales du Royaume, Brussels, f 177, 378.
137. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 365.
138. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 368.
139. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 488.
140. *Ibid.*
141. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 497.
142. *Ibid.*
143. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 511.
144. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 525.
145. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 260.
146. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p.523.
147. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p.560.
148. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 563.
149. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 576.

150. *Ibid.*
151. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 577.

4 - Pawn to Queen

1. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 514.
2. *Ibid.*
3. CSP Ven, IV, 366.
4. CSP Ven, IV, 338
5. HHStA Karton 5, 228.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (Yale University Press), p. 76.
8. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 585.
9. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 586.
10. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 592.
11. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 586.
12. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 587.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 588.
15. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 599.
16. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 606.
17. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 625.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Cal.Span. IV, ii p. 628.
20. Cal.Span. IV, ii, pp. 641–3.
21. Cal.Span. IV, ii, pp. 651–6.
22. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 642.
23. Cal.Span. IV, ii p. 643.
24. L&P VII, 95.
25. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 645.
26. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 630.
27. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 645.
28. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 630.
29. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 629.
30. See Mattingly dissertation, p. 624.
31. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 630.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Mattingly dissertation, p. 627.
34. Cal.Span. IV, ii, pp. 642–4.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*
37. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 645.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*
43. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 698.
44. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 690.
45. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 698.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.*
48. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 668.
49. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 670.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*
55. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 676.
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Ibid.*
58. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 678.
59. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 681.
60. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 688.
61. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 680.
62. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 678.
63. L&P VI, 391.
64. *Ibid.*
65. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 689.
66. See John North, *The Ambassador's Secret, Holbein and the World of the Renaissance* (Bloomsbury Academic).
67. Andrew Graham Dixon, *Renaissance* (University of California Press), p. 309.
68. L&P VI, 556 and 692.
69. L&P VI, 918 and 954.

5 - Royal Rivals

1. Chapuys to Charles, HHStA, Karton 5, 228, 46.
2. *Ibid.*
3. L&P VI, 265.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 737.
6. L&P VI, 252.
7. L&P VI, 295–8.
8. L&P VI, 320.
9. *Ibid.*
10. L&P VI, 254–5.
11. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 719.
12. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 721.

13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 722.
16. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 723.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 726.
21. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 733.
22. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 755.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 756.
25. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 755.
26. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 740.
27. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 754.
28. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 751.
29. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 752.
30. *Ibid.*
31. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 761.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*
34. L&P VI, 807–8.
35. Cal.Span. IV, i, p. 758.
36. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 760.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 761.
39. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 788.
40. *Ibid.*
41. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 777.
42. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 778.
43. *Ibid.*
44. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 786.
45. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 790.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 789.
48. *Ibid.*
49. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 796.
50. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 795.
51. *Ibid.*
52. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 797.
53. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 798.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*
56. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 813

57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*
60. Mattingly, dissertation, Chapter VI.
61. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 819.
62. Mattingly, dissertation, p. 762.
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.*
65. *Ibid.*
66. Richard Lundell, *The Mask of Dissimulation: Eustace Chapuys and Early Modern Diplomatic Technique, 1536–1545* (Urbana-Champaign), pp. 45–7.
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*
69. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 829.
70. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 842.
71. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 857.
72. *Ibid.*
73. *Ibid.*
74. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 861.
75. *Ibid.*
76. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 862.
77. *Ibid.*
78. *Ibid.*
79. *Ibid.*
80. *Ibid.*
81. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 863.
82. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 867.
83. *Ibid.*
84. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 876.
85. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 894.
86. *Ibid.*
87. *Ibid.*
88. *Ibid.*
89. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 788
90. *Ibid.*
91. *Ibid.*
92. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 893.
93. *Ibid.*
94. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 897.
95. *Ibid.*
96. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 892.
97. L&P III, 21.
98. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 897.

99. *Ibid.*
100. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 899.
101. *Ibid.*
102. *Ibid.*
103. *Ibid.*
104. L&P VII, 33.
105. L&P VII, 142.
106. *Ibid.*
107. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 21.
108. *Ibid.*
109. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 27.
110. *Ibid.*
111. *Ibid.*
112. *Ibid.*
113. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 28.
114. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 38.
115. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 39.
116. *Ibid.*
117. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 62.
118. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 64.
119. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 66.
120. *Ibid.*
121. *Ibid.*
122. *Ibid.*
123. *Ibid.*
124. *Ibid.*
125. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 124.
126. *Ibid.*
127. *Ibid.*
128. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 125.
129. Cal.Span. V, i, pp. 219–20.
130. *Ibid.*
131. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 156.
132. *Ibid.*
133. *Ibid.*
134. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 160.
135. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 161.
136. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 162.
137. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 169.
138. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 170.
139. *Ibid.*
140. *Ibid.*
141. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 248.
142. *Ibid.*

143. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 198.
144. See Dale Hoake's discussion of Anne's miscarriages in *Tudor Political Culture* (Cambridge University Press), p. 48.
145. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 264.
146. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 279.
147. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 344.
148. *Ibid.*
149. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 280.
150. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 171.
151. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 338.
152. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 331.
153. *Ibid.*
154. *Ibid.*
155. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 337.
156. *Ibid.*
157. *Ibid.*
158. *Ibid.*
159. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 338.
160. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 389.
161. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 196.
162. *Ibid.*
163. *Ibid.*
164. *Ibid.*
165. See J. J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation at the English People* (Wiley-Blackwell).
166. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 354.
167. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 355.
168. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 379.
169. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 381.
170. *Ibid.*
171. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 478.
172. *Ibid.*
173. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 479.
174. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 411.
175. *Ibid.*
176. *Ibid.*
177. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 454.
178. *Ibid.*
179. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 452.
180. *Ibid.*
181. *Ibid.*
182. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 492.
183. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 498.
184. Cal.Span. V, i, pp. 475–82.

185. *Ibid.*
186. *Ibid.*
187. *Ibid.*
188. *Ibid.*
189. *Ibid.*
190. *Ibid.*
191. *Ibid.*
192. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 505.
193. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 506.
194. *Ibid.*
195. *Ibid.*
196. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 533.
197. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 540.
198. *Ibid.*
199. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 541.
200. *Ibid.*
201. *Ibid.*
202. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 563.
203. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 548.
204. *Ibid.*
205. *Ibid.*
206. L&P IX, p. 187.

6 - Around the Throne the Thunder Rolls

1. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 526.
2. Cal.Span. V, ii, pp. 595–600.
3. *Ibid.*
4. L&P X, 20–1.
5. L&P X, 51.
6. Cal.Span. V, ii, pp. 20–22.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 19.
9. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 3.
10. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 6.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 18.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Mattingly, dissertation, p. 702.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 11.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 27.
21. *Ibid.*

22. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 39.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.*
28. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 59.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 70.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 72.
34. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 74.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Cal.Span. V, ii, pp. 53–5.
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.*
40. Cal.Span. V, ii, pp. 79–85.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Ibid.*
44. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 82.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.*
48. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 86
49. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 84.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*
52. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 85.
53. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 106.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Ibid.*
58. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 85.
59. *Ibid.*
60. HHStA Karton 7, 270–1
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.*
65. HHStA Karton 7, 270–3.

66. *Ibid.*
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*
69. *Ibid.*
70. *Ibid.*
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*
73. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 292.
74. *Ibid.*
75. *Ibid.*
76. See J. J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation at the English People* (Wiley-Blackwell), p. 128.
77. HHStA Karton 7, 273.
78. L&P X, 295.
79. *Ibid.*
80. Archives générales du Royaume, f 60, 379.
81. *Ibid.*
82. *Ibid.*
83. HHStA Karton 7, 270–1.
84. *Ibid.*
85. *Ibid.*
86. L&P X, 315.
87. Archives générales du Royaume, f 60, 379.
88. *Ibid.*
89. *Ibid.*
90. *Ibid.*
91. *Ibid.*
92. HHStA Karton 7, 276–7.
93. *Ibid.*
94. *Ibid.*
95. *Ibid.*
96. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 120.
97. *Ibid.*
98. *Ibid.*
99. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 124.
100. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 127.
101. *Ibid.*
102. *Ibid.*
103. *Ibid.*
104. *Ibid.*
105. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 127.
106. Archives générales du Royaume, f 60, 379.
107. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 127.
108. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 121.

109. *Ibid.*
110. *Ibid.*
111. *Ibid.*
112. *Ibid.*
113. *Ibid.*
114. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 118.
115. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 126.
116. *Ibid.*
117. HHStA Karton 7, 278–80.
118. *Ibid.*
119. *Ibid.*
120. *Ibid.*
121. *Ibid.*
122. HHStA Karton 7, 276–7.
123. Archives générales du Royaume, f 60, 379.
124. *Ibid.*
125. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 129.
126. *Ibid.*
127. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 131.
128. *Ibid.*
129. L&P X, 330.
130. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 199.
131. *Ibid.*
132. *Ibid.*

7 - Sacrifice

1. David Starkey, *Six Wives: The Queens of Henry VII*, p. 584.
2. *Ibid*, p. 586.
3. *Ibid.* p. 586.
4. *Ibid*, p. 591
5. L&P X, 374.
6. See David Starkey's discussion of the Seymour faction, pp. 585–6.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Wriothesley's chronicle, I, pp. 43–4.
9. Chapuys has made constant notes of Henry's dalliances, but up to this point none of them had been serious – Jane notwithstanding.
10. L&P X, 377.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. Wriothesley's chronicle, I. p. 43.
14. HHStA Karton 7, 312.
15. See Richard Lundell, *The Mask of Dissimulation: Eustace Chapuys and Early Modern Diplomatic Technique*, pp. 86–7.
16. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 138.

17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 157.
21. Wriothesley's *Chronicle of England During the Reign of the Tudors*, p. 115.
22. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 158.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*
26. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 157.
27. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 196.
28. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 214.
29. Archives générales du Royaume, f 60, 379, Charles Quint to Chapuys.
30. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 156.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*
33. L&P XI, 275.
34. L&P X, 117.
35. *Ibid.*
36. See David Head, *The Ebbs and Flows of Fortune: The Life of Thomas Howard, Third Duke of Norfolk* (University of Georgia Press), pp. 35–54.
37. *Ibid.*
38. L&P XII, i, pp. 284–5.
39. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 340.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*
42. L&P XII, i, pp. 527, 537, ii, p. 14.
43. *Ibid.*
44. L&P, ii, 448, 450 and 453.
45. Mendoza to Charles, Cal.Span. VI, i, pp. 39–40.
46. HHStA Karton 8, 209–10.
47. *Ibid.*
48. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 509.
49. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 510.
50. *Ibid.*
51. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 518.
52. Cal.Span. V, ii, p. 509.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*

8 - Mary

1. David Loades, *Mary Tudor: A Life* (Amberley Publishing), p. 83.

2. *Ibid*, p. 84.
3. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 560.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 839.
7. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 33.
8. See Linda Porter, *Mary Tudor, The First Queen* (Hachette), p. 1581.
9. L&P VI, 491–2.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 12.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 33.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. Chapuys does not name these spies in Mary's household but through them he kept up a steady flow of correspondence.
21. Cal.Span. V, i, pp. 129–30.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Cal.Span. V, i, pp. 155–64.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*

9 - Cromwell

1. Chapuys was fascinated by the chancellor, and wrote at length to de Granvelle. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 812, and V, pp. 295, 412, 420, 484, 504. V, i, p. 568. 'As you desire me to give you a detailed account of secretary Cromwell and his origin, I will tell you that he is the son of a poor blacksmith, who lived and is buried at a small village distant one league and a half from this city. His uncle, the father of a cousin of his, whom he has since considerably enriched, was cook to the last archbishop of Canterbury (Warham). In his youth Cromwell was ill-conditioned and wild. After being some time in prison he went to Flanders, Rome, and other places in Italy, where he made some stay. On his return to England he married the daughter of a fuller and for a time kept servants in his house who worked for him at that handicraft. Later on he became a solicitor and thereby became known to the late cardinal of York who took him into his service. At his master's fall he behaved very well towards him; and on the Cardinal's death, Master Wallop, now ambassador at the Court of France, somehow threatened and insulted him; whereupon, to save

himself, he asked and obtained an audience from king Henry, whom he addressed in such flattering terms and eloquent language – promising to make him the richest King in the world – that the King at once took him into his service, and made him councillor, though his appointment was kept secret for more than four months … The Chancellor (Audley) is but a tool in his hands.'

2. Mattingly, dissertation, p. 655.
3. *Ibid.*
4. See Mattingly dissertation, pp. 644–7.
5. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 811.
6. Mattingly, dissertation, p. 656.
7. L&P VIII, 38.
8. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 498.
9. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 841.
10. Cal.Span. IV, ii, p. 859.
11. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 423.
12. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 24.
13. Cal.Span. V, i, p. 3.
14. L&P XIV, 187–8.
15. L&P XIV, 189.
16. L&P XV, 1–20.
17. L&P XV, 32.
18. L&P XV, 151.
19. L&P XV, 425.
20. L&P XV, 302.
21. L&P XV, 259–60.
22. L&P XV, 363.
23. *Ibid.*
24. L&P XV, 458.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*

10 - Violent Imprints

1. Pierre Vaissière*, Charles de Marillac, Ambassadeur et Homme Politique sous les Règnes de François 1er, Henry 2 et François 2, 1510–156*0, p. 9.
2. Jean Kaulek, *Correspondance Politique de MM de Castillon et de Marillac, Ambassadeurs de France en Angleterre, 1537–1542*, p. 165
3. *Ibid.*
4. Starkey, *Six Wives*, p. 627.
5. Wriothesley's chronicle, I, pp. 109–110. Strype ecclesiastical memorials, vi, p. 213.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. De Marillac to Francis I in Kaulek, p. 178.

9. Archives générales du royaume, de Granvelle to Charles, f 20.
10. *Ibid.*
11. L&P XV, 261.
12. L&P XV, 369; Kaulek, p. 191.
13. See Lundell thesis.
14. Archives générales du royaume, de Granvelle to Charles, f 46.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Cal.Span. XI, i, p. 34.
17. Cal.Span. XI, i, p. 35.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Cal.Span. XI, i, p. 5.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Cal.Span. XI, i, p. 8.
22. Cal.Span. XI, i, p. 10.
23. Cal.Span. XI, i, p. 17.
24. *Ibid.*
25. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 306.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 308.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 313.
31. *Ibid.*
32. L&P XVI, 149.
33. *Ibid.*
34. L&P XVI, 148.
35. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 309.
36. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 319.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 326.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*
41. HHStA Karton 8, 344–63.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Cal.Span. VI, i, pp. 30–2.
44. The Howards, an ancient Catholic family, were popular in the North.
45. HHStA Karton 8, 85.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.*
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*

52. HHStA Karton 8, 153.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*
55. HHStA Karton 8, 156.
56. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 394.
57. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 408.
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.*
62. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 410.
63. *Ibid.*
64. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 464.
65. *Ibid.*
66. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 468.
67. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 472.
68. *Ibid.*
69. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 472.
70. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 474.

11 - Glory

1. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 505.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 505.
3. Chapuys to Mary of Hungary, HHStA Karton 8, 360.
4. HHStA Karton 9, p. 60.
5. See Francis's formal declaration of war, Cal.Span. VI, ii, p. 53, 9 July 1542; Chapuys to Charles HHStA Karton 10, 167–8.
6. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 505.
7. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 493.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 493.
11. Mary of Hungary to Chapuys, HHStA Karton 9, 326–327; Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 54.
12. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 497.
13. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 498.
14. Mary of Hungary to Chapuys, Cal. Span. VI, i, p. 489.
15. 2 May 1542, The Emperor's powers to Eustace Chapuys. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p. 1.
16. De Marillac to Francis, Jean Kaulek, *Correspondance politique de M. M. de Castillion de Marillac*. pp. 422–3.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 505.
19. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p.11.
20. Cal.Span. VI, i, p. 506.

21. Cal.Span. VI, ii, pp. 4–59.
22. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p. 15.
23. De Marillac to Francis in Jean Kaulek, *Correspondance Politique de MM de Castillon de Marillac, Ambassadeurs de France en Angleterre (1537–1542)* (Geneva, 1971), p. 422. HHStA Karton 9, fol. 331–2.
24. HHStA Karton 10, 131–54. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p. 41.
25. De Marillac to Francis in Jean Kaulek, *Correspondance Politique de MM de Castillon de Marillac, Ambassadeurs de France en Angleterre (1537–1542)*, p. 423. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p. 22.
26. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p. 21.
27. Cal.Span. VI, ii, pp. 261–4
28. *Ibid.*
29. Mary of Hungary to Chapuys, 18 March 1543. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p. 280.
30. HHStA Karton 9, 379. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p.291.
31. *Ibid.* Cal.Span. VI, ii, pp. 262–3.
32. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p. 304.
33. HHStA Karton 10, p. 565.
34. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p. 318.
35. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p. 324.
36. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p. 426. HHStA, Karton 9, fos 395–7. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p. 343.
37. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p. 436.
38. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p. 427.
39. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p. 485–8.
40. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p.444.
41. Cal.Span. VI, ii, 459.
42. HHStA, Karton 11. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p.465. Chapuys was still attempting to convince the English to involve themselves in the campaign on the Continent. He pushed Mary of Hungary to exempt the English merchants in Antwerp from the 1 per cent tax she had previously imposed. As far as the ambassador was concerned, it was a small price to pay for English commitment to the war. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p. 438, 13 July 1543; HHStA Karton 10, 721. For further discussion see Richard Lundell's thesis, entitled *The Mask of Dissimulation: Eustace Chapuys and Early Modern Diplomatic Technique, 1536–1545* (Urbana Champaign), p. 259–60.
43. Cal.Span. VI, ii, pp. 485–8.
44. Cal.Span. VI, ii, p. 498.
45. HHStA Karton 11, 374.
46. Cal.Span. VII, i, p. 13. HHStA Karton 11, 464–9. Henry and Charles were still at war with Scotland, France's ally, and Henry feared England would be vulnerable if his army left for France. Charles instead offered to send representatives to the Scots to ask

them to make peace with Henry. Chapuys personally suggested (although the instruction came from Charles) that Henry send a delegation to Holstein, asking him to make peace with Charles.

47. Cal.Span. VII, i, p. 255.

48. HHStA Karton 11, 309; Cal.Span. VII, i, p. 255. Henry was to invade Boulogne and Montreuil, then Abbeville and Rouen. He had raised a levy from throughout England to show his earnestness and to match the horses provided by Mary. However, English enthusiasm for the venture cooled later that campaigning season, due to both Charles's delayed departure from Spain and the lateness of the season. HHStA Karton 10, 667–70; Cal.Span. VI, ii, p. 353.

49. Chapuys to Charles, HHStA Karton 11, 98–9; Cal.Span. VII, i, pp. 259–61. Mary also complained of the 'Cruel and Barbarous manner' in which the English were treating the horses and drivers she had supplied. The English were stealing and beating the horses, and her supplied Imperial drivers were close to desertion despite her order that deserters would be punished. Cal.Span. VII, I, p. 248–9. HHStA Karton 11, 548–58.

50. HHStA Karton 11, 344; Cal.Span. VII, i, pp. 362–3.

51. Chapuys to de Granvelle, HHStA Karton 11, 150; Cal.Span. VII, i, p. 378.

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1. Charles to his Imperial ambassadors, HHStA Karton 11, 432.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Cal.Span. VII, i, p. 381.
4. Chapuys to Charles, Cal.Span. VIII, i, pp. 453 and 24.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Cal.Span. VIII, i, p. 3.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Cal.Span. VIII, i, p. 5.
9. Cal.Span. VIII, i, p. 7.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. Cal.Span. VIII, i, p. 12.
13. Cal.Span. VIII, i, p. 19.
14. Cal.Span. VIII, i, p. 20.
15. Cal.Span. VIII, i, p. 104.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. HHStA Karton 12, 62.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Cal.Span. VIII, i, p. 111.
22. *Ibid.*

23. Cal.Span. VIII, i, pp. 125–7.
24. Cal.Span. VIII, i, p. 115; HHStA Karton 12, 126.
25. HHStA Karton 12, 74–5.
26. Cal.Span. VIII, i, pp. 136–7.
27. Cal.Span. VIII, i, pp. 146, 159–60,167 and 173–4.
28. Cal.Span. VIII, i, pp. 142–3 and 217–9.
29. Cal.Span. VIII, i, pp. 100–2.
30. Joseph Orsier, 'Notes et Documents Inédits pour Server à l'Histoire d'Eustache Chapuys d'Annecy', *Revue de Savoie*, 7.
31. Liasse, GG198, Archives de la Ville d'Annecy. For an in-depth study of Chapuys' collège in Annecy, see Serge Tomamichel, *Le Collège d'Annecy au VVI Siècle: Une École de la Reforme Catholique?* (Paris, 1999).

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